CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Proposed Balkan bloc. Statement of Dr. Tibor Eakhardt in regard to Italian attitude toward formation of,- that while Italy undoubtedly started the idea it had now changes its views on the subject.

770.00/721

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Des. #1944
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Dec.23,1939 From/To Hungary (Travers)

File No. 760h.64/199

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

I mentioned to him that I had had several talks in Italy regarding the attitude of Italy towards the proposed Balkan Bloc which apparently had failed of success. Dr. Eckhardt said that while Italy undoubtedly started the idea of a Balkan Bloc it had now changed its views, realizing that such an association of countries is impossible at the present time. Italy now desires the union of certain Roman Catholic peoples, i.e., Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and Slovakia, the end of the "Axis" being in Rome. He said that the anti-communistic feeling in Italy is so strong that the Italian Government and the Church are in agreement on this phase of international policy. Italy's Balkan policy, therefore, is based on the desire to estop further Russian penetration.

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
JAN 15 1940
MR. WELLES

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

1940 JAN 17 PM 12 49
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
JAN 15 1940
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

DATE: January 12, 1940.

SUBJECT:

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Constantin Fotitch, Minister of Yugoslavia, and Mr. James Clement Dunn, Adviser on Political Relations.

COPIES TO: Eu

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 16 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

770.00/722

O-P-O 1—1493

770.00

The Minister of Yugoslavia came in this morning to ask whether we had any information regarding the reported agreement between Italy and Hungary with a view to the stabilization of the Balkan States. Mr. Fotitch also asked whether we had any official information regarding the question of passage of Italian troops across Yugoslavia in the event of a Russian attack upon Hungary.

I told the Minister we had no official information in regard to these developments, but that from such reports as we had received, it seemed to be evident that some form of agreement had been reached between Ciano and Csaky.

With regard to the reported request by Italy to send troops across Hungary, I asked the Minister what he thought would

FILED
JAN 17 1940

would be the position of his Government in the event of such a request. He said he thought his Government's attitude would be governed by two considerations; one was the form in which the granting of such a request could be presented to the Yugoslav public, that is, it would be comparatively easy to comply with if it could be explained as a measure of protection of Yugoslav territory and prevention of war coming to the Balkans; the second consideration would be the reaction of the British and French Governments to such a request. He said that in his opinion it was perfectly possible that a request for troop transit could be granted if it would appear as a real contribution to stabilization of the Balkan situation. He further said that, in his opinion, much of Italy's present plan for stabilization of the Balkan area depended upon Rumania's attitude with respect to making a settlement with Hungary, which would probably entail the sacrifice of some of the present Rumanian territory.

James Clement Dunn.

PA/D JCD:AMW

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT There is no evidence of further attempts to be made to effect combination of Balkan States; their interests lie in different directions and the Russian menace is not great enough to bring them together, at the present time.

770.00/724

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel.#9 3 p m
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Jan. 17 1940 **From** Rumania (Hibbard)
To

File No. 764.65/195

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

bb

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Balkan bloc;

Csaky said there was no such a thing as a ,- or that no such bloc was possible; Hungary was tied up to Italy and the feeling with Yugoslavia was getting stronger all the time.

mr

770.00/726

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Memorandum
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated dec. 9, 1939 From / To Hungary (Montgomery)

File No. 740.0011 European War, 1939/1514

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

770.00/727

SUBJECT

Prime Minister's statement to the press reiterating Bulgaria's determination to pursue a policy of peace and to seek a settlement of her claims.

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See #377
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Dec. 16, 1939 From /M/ Bulgaria (Millard)

File No. 774.00/102

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

ml

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 22 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Athens

Cor SB

Dated January 20, 1940

Rec'd 10:07 a. m.

HSM
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br.)

Paraphrase to ONI + MID - 1/22/40 GVA LS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Telegram
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

770.00

Secretary of State,

Washington.

12, January 20, 2 p. m.

The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs this morning expressed the view that Italy's efforts to reenforce Balkan peace are not unpleasing to Germany which he said is doing its utmost to dissuade Russia from attacking toward the Straits. He added that his latest information is "encouraging" regarding the Bulgarian Government's ability to withstand Russian pressure.

MACVEAGH

WWC

770.00/728

FILED
JAN 25 1940

FP

Paraphrase of telegram no. 12 of January 20, 1940, from the American Legation at Athens. (770.00/728)

The opinion was expressed to me this morning by the Under Foreign Secretary that Germany is not displeased by the efforts of Italy to reenforce peace in the Balkans. Germany is said to be making every effort to persuade Soviet Russia not to attack toward Istanbul. Latest reports received by the Greek Foreign Office are "encouraging" with respect to the ability of Bulgaria to withstand pressure from Moscow.

NE GVA/LS

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT

Turco-Bulgarian relations, Bulgaria's relations with Greece, Yugoslavia and Rumania:

Prime Minister's comments regarding - , neutrality of Bulgaria, Bulgaria as springboard for attack on Straits by Russia or Germany, Bulgarian opinion as to war in Finland; possibility of Rumania fighting should Russia invade Bessarabia, attitude of Allies toward Russia; commercial treaty with Russia, air agreement and rumors of "Russian base at Bourgas"; German or Russian push towards Straits or combined German-Russian thrust.

M

770.00/ 729

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. 5, noon
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Jan. 18, 1940 From / To /// Bulgaria, Millard

File No. 767.74/93

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

FP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EDA
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone (BR)

FROM

BELGRADE

Dated January 20, 1940

Received 12:30 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 22 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

22, January 20, 2 p.m.

According to reliable information the Yugoslav Foreign Minister left Belgrade last night for the Yugoslav Rumanian frontier to meet today the Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs. It is understood that Cincar-Markovic and Gafencu will discuss joint Yugoslav Rumanian action at the coming Balkan Entente Conference at Belgrade as well as economic and possibly military matters of mutual interest.

LANE

DDM

770.00

770.00/730

FP

FILED
JAN 23 1940

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RFP
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM

Belgrade

Dated January 20, 1940

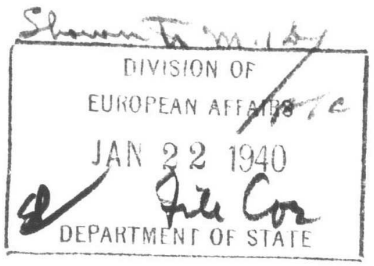
Rec'd 9:32 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

Shown to M. Ly

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 22 1940
File Cor
DEPARTMENT OF STATE



23, January 20, 6 p.m.

My 22, January 20, 2 p.m.

I have official confirmation that Gafencu and Cincar-Markovic are meeting today on the Rumanian frontier. It is my impression that the chief object of the confidence (conference?) is to discuss the recent meeting of (*) and Csaky in the light of the coming conference of the Balkan Entente. There is no doubt that Balkan entente representatives here are anxious as to what really transpired in Venice.

Repeated to Bucharest, Budapest and Rome.

LANE

CFW
(*) apparent omission

770.00

770.00/731

FILED
JAN 23 1940

GP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RFP
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

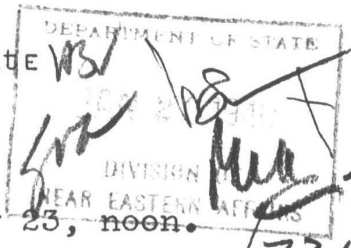
FROM Belgrade

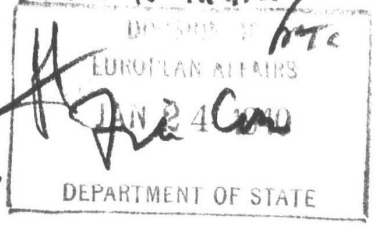
Dated January 23, 1940

Rec'd 8:30 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington





24, January 23, ~~noon~~.

My 23, January 20, 6 p.m.

One. The Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me last evening that his meeting with Gafencu on January 20th (arranged at the request of Cincar-Markovitch) was for the purpose of discussing the Balkan situation in the light of Italian-Hungarian discussions at Venice and Turkish-Bulgarian conversations at Sofia. He said that Gafencu is grateful to Italy and to Turkey for having improved the relations of Hungary and Bulgaria respectively with Rumania and for having persuaded those "dissatisfied" countries to adjourn their territorial revindications until after the war.

Two. Cincar-Markovitch said that the meeting of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente which will meet here from February 2 to February 4 under the Presidency of Gafencu will not (repeat not) discuss the formation of a Balkan bloc to include Bulgaria but will issue a statement emphasizing the solidarity of the

Entente

770.00

770.00/732

FILED
JAN 26 1940

Entente on three points: maintenance of peace in the Balkans, neutrality and gradual settlement of mutual problems (that is territorial questions). I said that I felt certain this policy would give my Government much satisfaction, it being an adaptation of the good neighbor policy which had had so much success on the American continent.

Three. The Minister said that Gafencu's original proposal for a Balkan or Danubian bloc had fallen through because of the attitude of some of the great powers. He evaded my direct question as to the attitude of Italy although admitting that Italy desires peace and neutrality in the Balkans. From other Balkan sources I learn that Germany and the Soviet Union are opposed to the formation of the bloc, principally because of Turkey's affiliations with the Allies.

Four. As to communism in Yugoslavia the Minister said that it is virtually nonexistent and that reports regarding it are due entirely to foreign propaganda. He did not deny that Italy in addition to Germany and Russia is partly responsible nor did he express disagreement with my theory that Italy desires a weak and disunited Yugoslavia which will be dependent on Rome for support and therefore officially emphasizes its desire for a strong

and

and united Yugoslavia. He said that the Yugoslav Minister to Italy who had recently returned to Rome had again been reassured by Ciano as to Italy's benevolent intentions towards Yugoslavia. Cincar-Markovitch admitted that German and Italian interests clash with respect to Yugoslavia both politically and economically. (As evidence of strained German-Italian relations here the Greek Minister reports a statement made to him by the German Minister to the effect that Italy is posing as the saviour of the Balkans from Bolshevism now that the danger has been removed while as a matter of fact it is Berlin which alone has successfully combated Bolshevism in the Balkans.)

Five. As a result of Finland's resistance against the Soviets and improvement in relations between Hungary and Rumania there is increased optimism here regarding the ability of the Balkans to remain out of the war. This feeling was reflected by Cincar-Markovitch's attitude yesterday.

LANE

NPL

DIVISION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS JAN 26 1940 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSM
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br.)

FROM Belgrade

Dated January 26, 1940

Rec'd 10:10 p. m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE JAN 29 1940 DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Telegram to Belgrade 1/26/40 PHA/LS

Secretary of State,

Washington.

26, January 26, 6 p. m.

During the last few weeks and especially since the meeting between Ciano and Csaky at Venice certain changes in Italy's policy towards the Balkans have become apparent:

One. Up to some weeks ago we had information from the Foreign Office as well as from diplomatic colleagues that Italy regarded the so-called Balkan or Danubian neutral bloc as a dead issue. Now however the Foreign Office is less positive regarding Italy's attitude. I interpret this present uncertainty as indicating a possible readiness on the part of Italy to espouse the creation of a combination of the Danubian states if and when the opportune moment arrives.

Two. Although formerly fostering discord between Rumania and Hungary with a view to destroying the solidarity of the Balkan Entente (which it will be recalled

770.00/733

FILED JAN 29 1940 GRR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

recalled was formed for the primary purpose of checking Italian aspirations in the Balkans) the ~~Venice~~ (?) FROM apparently had as their primary objective a rapprochement between Hungary and Rumania. This change of Italian policy towards the Balkan Entente reflected in the attitude of the Yugoslav Government which since the Anglo-French-Turkish understanding of last May had not been over enthusiastic on behalf of the Entente. Now that Yugoslavia is sure of Italy's approval of increased cooperation in the Balkans with respect to the maintenance of peace and neutrality, the Yugoslav Government is enthusiastic regarding the forthcoming meeting of the Entente. The Minister for Foreign Affairs in his conversation with me on January 22 radiated optimism and frankness, a new departure for him.

Three. The apparently parallel diplomatic action on the part of Italy and Turkey towards Hungary and Bulgaria respectively suggests the possibility that the Italian and Turkish Governments with a view to checking Soviet penetration in the Balkans are taking common action to solidify the Balkans as a neutral entity. Some of my Balkan colleagues insist furthermore that a detente exists between Italy and Turkey, if not an actual understanding, with regard to Mediterranean and Balkan questions.

Repeated to Rome.

LANE

CSB

PREPARING OFFICE
WILL INDICATE WHETHER

TELEGRAM SENT

TO BE TRANSMITTED
CONFIDENTIAL CODE
NONCONFIDENTIAL CODE
PARTAIR
PLAIN

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Charge Department:
Full rate
Day letter
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Department of State

Washington,

1940 JAN 27 PM 12 18

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

This [illegible] Code.
It should be [illegible] before
being communicated to anyone.
BN

January ~~26~~ 27, 1940

1 Pm

AMERICAN LEGATION,

BELGRADE.

7

733

Please repeat your 26, January 26, 6 p.m. to Embassy, Ankara, requesting Embassy to telegraph its comments to Department.

Hull
WSM

NE PHA/LS
Mee
for

CR
JAN 27 1940

770.00/733

GMR

Enciphered by _____

Sent by operator _____ *M.,* _____, *19*____, _____

1—1462 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RFP
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM

Belgrade

Dated January 26, 1940

Rec'd 6:52 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JAN 27 1940
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 27 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

28, January 26, 5 p.m. 1732

My telegram No. 24, January 23, noon, second paragraph.

The Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs stated to me today that the statement will probably also refer to the satisfaction of the Balkan Entente that its relations with Hungary and Bulgaria are so satisfactory. He said that there would be no Hungarian nor Bulgarian observers at the meeting.

The Rumanian Ambassador informs me that the permanent council of the Entente may decide to convoke an economic conference of Entente states, postponed from last autumn, and to arrange for a meeting of the general staffs of the four countries to discuss military questions.

LANE

RR

770.00/734

GMR

RECEIVED
JAN 31 1940

1 3 5

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT

German Minister who left Athens hurriedly some days ago to attend meeting of envoys to all the Balkan States is apparently being detained in Berlin but it is though here that this may not be unconnected with official dissatisfaction over his conduct of his mission and the growing Allied control of Greek economy.

m

770.00/735

GMR

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. 14, 4pm
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Jan.14,1940 From Greece, MacVeagh

File No. 868.51/1590

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

136

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT

Turkey assured Bulgaria that she had no hostile intentions; Bulgaria to maintain policy of neutrality but if Germany or Russia were to invade Balkans Bulgaria would fight in defense of its integrity and its right to remain neutral and if confronted by demand to permit passage for invading forces through Bulgarian territory Bulgaria would refuse and if necessary resist by force rather than plead inability to prevent it. Numan promised that so long as Bulgaria effectively maintained its neutrality both Turkey and its allies would respect Bulgarian frontiers as inviolable.

M

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. 7, 8pm
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Jan. 25, 1940 From / To 7/11/ Turkey, MacMurray

File No. 767.74/94

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

770.00/736

GMR

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Balkan Conference. Berlin papers denounce British and French press reports concerning despatch of German National Socialist SS battalions to Russian East Galicia as a last minute effort to panic the forth-coming-

mr

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. #237, noon
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Jan. 30, 1940 **From** Germany (Kirk)
To

File No. 740.0011 European War, 1939/1574

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

770.00/737

FP

737

HSM

GRAY

Berlin

Dated January 30, 1940

Rec'd 11 a. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

237, January 30, noon.

My 217, January 27, 5 p. m.

Referring to reports now carried by the British and French press concerning the despatch of German National Socialist SS battalions to Russian East Galicia , this morning's Berlin papers denounce these reports as a last minute effort to "panic the forthcoming Balkan Conference" and publish an official German statement denying the presence of any SS formations in the above mentioned territory.

KIRK

PEG

note
770.00

1574

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT It is in Germany's interest to keep peace in the Balkans according to statement by German Minister and Italy's policy in endeavoring to improve relations between Hungary and Rumania in accord with Germany's policy.

mr

740.00/738

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. #30, 6 p.m.
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Jan. 29, 1940 From/To Yugoslavia (Lane)

File No. 740.0011 European War, 1939/1572

FP

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

JI

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to any one. (br)

FROM Ankara

Dated January 31, 1940

Rec'd 7:47 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 1 1940
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Secretary of State

Washington

9, January 31, 4 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Referring to Belgrade's telegram No. 26, January 25, 6 p.m. 735

One. There is not apparent here any reason to believe that there has been or is in prospect any Turco-Italian detente in the sense of a political understanding or coordination of policies. I believe that the position remains as described to me by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and reported in the third paragraph of my telegram No. 3, January 10, 6 p.m. I understood that the President of the Republic only yesterday expressed to the British Ambassador the same inability to understand Italy's intentions in the Balkans.

740.0011EW/1415

FILED FEB 5 1940

Two, As previously reported there has come to prevail a somewhat less aloof and suspicious attitude between the two governments which apparently manifests itself in a mutual readiness to be somewhat more

accommodating

770.00/739

accommodating in matters of routine business. But the Turks have no more respect for the Italian Government or confidence in it than before; and while they are not displeased that Italy should warn Soviet Russia and impliedly Germany against intrusion into the Balkan peninsula, the general tendency here is to discount her activity as partly a bluff and partly an endeavor to lay a basis for future claims by creating on world opinion the impression that her interests in this quarter are more substantial than in fact they are.

Repeated to Belgrade.

MACMURRAY

RR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

AC

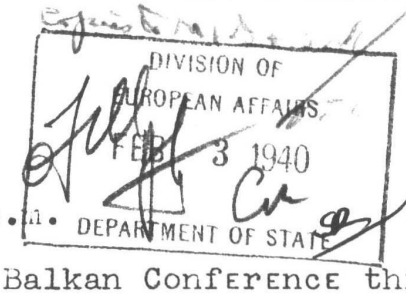
GRAY

Berlin

FROM

Dated February 2, 1940

Rec'd 11:58 p.m.



Secretary of State

Washington

277, February 2, 6 p.m.

Commenting upon the Balkan Conference this evening's Foreign Office DDPK states that any steps to ensure peace taken by the participating states will be welcomed by Germany and Italy which believe that the various claims as between countries in that area can be settled at the proper time and not necessarily through war. Great Britain and France on the other hand are portrayed as being interested in upsetting the equilibrium of the Balkan area and according to the DDPK the Belgrade conference will not be able to overlook the British and French efforts to enlist diplomatic and military support for their aims from Turkey, that members of the Balkan Entente which became their ally after the European war had broken out. Referring to the "fantastic stories" concerning German-Russian designs against the Balkans and concerning German troop concentrations in preparation for an invasion of the southeast the commentary states that these stories are floated by the Western

powers

770.00/740

770.00
740.0011EW

FILED

FEB 6 1940

powers with a view to creating among the Balkan countries a desire for dependence upon these powers and with a view further to obscuring Germany's real wish which is that peace should be maintained in the Balkans.

KIRK

CFU:WWC

JR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

GRAY

Rome

FROM Dated February 4, 1940

Rec'd 8 a.m.

U - LIAISON OFFICE
FEB - 7 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Secretary of State,

Washington.

79, February 4, 11 a.m.

The newspapers here have carried long despatches from their correspondents in Belgrade concerning the Balkan Entente Conference, but there has been no editorial comment so far. Correspondents seem to agree, as reported from Belgrade in this morning's GIORNALE D'ITALIA that whatever else the conference may have achieved, it has at least "established as no longer existing Balkan questions of such a complex and exasperating nature as to evade a friendly solution". The same correspondent goes on to say that "in substance therefore the Balkan States and Rumania in particular are offering Hungary and Bulgaria to discuss the problem of their revindications on a basis to be determined as Gafenco has stated within the framework of a regional interest".

All correspondents express satisfaction with result of the conference for which no small share of the credit is given to Italy.

PHILLIPS

McL

FILED
FEB 9 1940

770.00/741

FP

REB

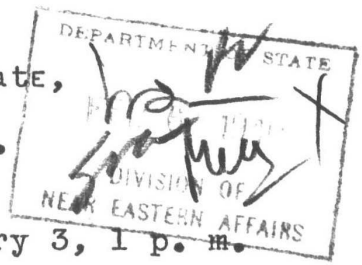
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

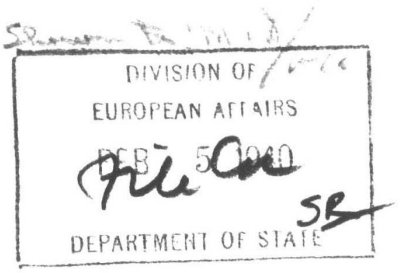
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM BELGRADE

Dated February 3, 1940

Rec'd 4:07 p. m.





Secretary of State,

Washington.

33, February 3, 1 p. m.

CONFIDENTIAL.

The British Minister who saw Metaxas this morning informs me that Metaxas commented as follows regarding yesterday's developments of the conference.

One. The four Ministers are in agreement regarding the communique to be issued which will refer in a general way to peace, neutrality and to the friendly efforts which Italy has made to bring about these aims in the Balkans.

Two. An effort will be made to bring about agreement of Bulgaria outside of the framework of the Balkan Entente to express itself in sympathy with the Entente aims to preserve peace and neutrality in the Balkans.

Three. At the forthcoming economic conference of the Balkan Entente only economic matters affecting the Balkan Entente will be discussed. Economic relations between individual members of the Entente and outside powers will be excluded.

Four.

770.00

770.00/742

FP

FEB 6 1940

Four. It has been agreed that the members of the Entente will resist any military attack. Metaxas was apparently vague on this point as Campbell was unable to answer my direct question whether in the event of an attack on Rumania by Russia, Yugoslavia would come to Rumania's assistance. Our opinion from what we have been told by Yugoslav military authorities is that Yugoslavia will not do so.

The Secretary of the Turkish Embassy informed the Legation today that Sarajoglu was very satisfied with his conversation at Sofia on February 1 with the Bulgarian Prime Minister who had given assurances that Bulgaria would do nothing to endanger peace in the Balkans and would leave the settlement of its territorial claims to peaceful negotiation.

Repeated to Paris and Rome, Ankara, Athens, Bucharest, Sofia.

LANE

JRL

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

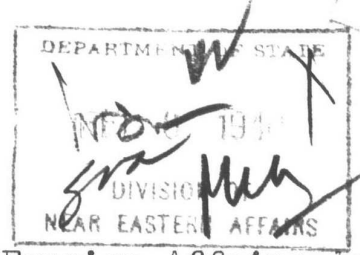
FROM Belgrade

Dated February 4, 1940

Rec'd 12:20 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.



35, February 4, noon.

Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs in speech of welcome to his Balkan Entente colleagues last night emphasized satisfaction regarding attitude of Bulgaria and Italy, "in conformity with ~~specific~~ pacific policy of the states of the Balkan Entente" and gratitude towards Italy for her "precious contribution to the maintenance of peace for southeastern Europe by her prudent attitude of 'nonbelligerency' which she adopted at the start of the conflict". He said that the present session of the Balkan Entente has as its task the continuance of its policy of peace and conciliation and an improvement of economic collaboration among the Balkan countries.

The Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs as President of the Permanent Council replied in a speech which emphasized the desire to establish relations of confidence with Bulgaria and Hungary. He expressed his conviction that for the solution of Danubian as well as Balkan problems it may be possible to find within the framework of

770.00/743

FEB 6 1940

of a "Regional Entente" a formula to conciliate and to bring together neighboring states. Gafencu also expressed appreciation for the "political and moral worth of the friendly attitude of Italy."

Full text by pouch.

LANE

EDA:RR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

KLP

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (BR)

FROM

Belgrade

Dated February 4, 1940.

Rec'd. 6:57 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Secretary of State,

Washington.

36, February 4, 8 p.m.

The following are the seven main points of the communique issued at termination of meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente this evening:

(1) Maintenance of peace in the Balkans.

(2) Maintenance of neutrality towards belligerents.

(3) Maintenance of policy of solidarity of Balkan states directed against nobody.

(4) Maintenance and development of friendly relations with neighboring states.

(5) Amelioration of economic relations between the Balkan states.

(6) Prolongation of Balkan Entente for seven years as from February 9, 1940.

(7) Ministers for Foreign Affairs to collaborate until next meeting which will be held in Athens in September 1941.

Gafenco,

770.00/744

FP

FILED
FEB 6 1940

#36 February 4, 8 p.m. from Belgrade

Gafenco, the retiring president, issued statement to the press in general terms emphasizing his desire to avoid dissemination of sensational rumors.

LANE

KLP

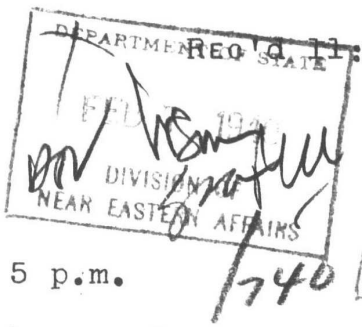
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

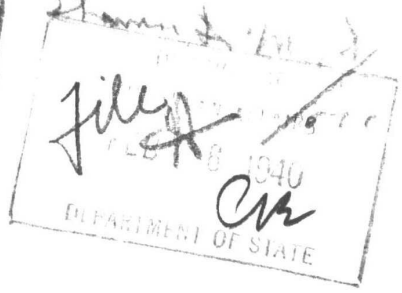
RFP
A portion of this telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM Berlin

Dated February 5, 1940

Rec'd 11:43 p.m.





Secretary of State

Washington

312, February 5, 5 p.m.

(GRAY) My 277, February 2, 6 p.m.

The German press as represented in particular by an article by the diplomatic editor of the BOERSEN ZEITUNG notes with satisfaction the stress laid in the communique of the Balkan Conference upon the necessity for maintaining peace in this area which it is emphasized accords with the aims of the axis powers. The belaboring of the word "peace" and the lack of mention of "neutrality" are viewed however as indicating the difficulties which had to be overcome in reaching agreement. These difficulties it is asserted arose from the fact that the majority of the Balkan States had at one time or another let themselves be "ear-marked" by Great Britain and France for their policy aiming at the encirclement of Germany and Italy. Following Yugoslavia's "declaration of independence" and the efforts being put forth by Rumania to free itself from the compromising effects of Great Britain's guarantee, Turkey as the latest but "not belligerent" ally of the western

powers

770.00/745

GML

powers is portrayed as the country whose attitude interested its Balkan partners the most and reference is made to the valiant efforts apparently made by the latter countries to steer the Turkish Ship of State back into the home waters of Balkan neutrality. According to the commentary Turkish original fears that economic integration with Germany would lead to enslavement have not been realized and Germany, provided it meets with reciprocity, is willing to forget the hasty line of reasoning which led Turkey to depart from its fruitful collaboration with the Reich. In view of the presence of British and French troops in former Turkish provinces where they are in a position to exert pressure upon the Balkan countries and in view of the conditions of stress which Great Britain and France realizing that they cannot win the war alone are tempted to exploit to win new allies for their cause, Germany, it is stated, is entitled to expect in the future some concrete demonstration of the responsibility for the maintenance of peace which Turkey has assumed and now withstanding shares with other members of the Conference. (END GRAY)

It is learned that the German Government spokesman at today's Foreign Press conference expressed satisfaction with the communique of the Balkan Conference and cited with gratification an editorial from the Paris TEMPS allegedly

maintaining

maintaining that the communique was not in accord with the obligations assumed by the various states vis-a-vis the Allies.

KIRK

CFW:ROW

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSM

GRAY

FROM Rome

Dated February 6, 1940

Rec'd 10:13 a. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
741

81, February 6, 1 p. m.

My 79, February 4, 11 a. m.

Editorial comment on the Balkan Entente meeting yesterday and today mildly approves the communique issued in Belgrade in which it finds nothing new or startling. Satisfaction is expressed at the peaceful and cooperative intentions inspiring the four Governments, the conciliatory attitude displayed toward neighboring countries and there is a general inference that one must now wait and see what practical effects the meeting will have. Today's MESSAGGERO noted that the communique could disappoint only those who hoped for sensational results such as were "impossible for statesmen realizing the gravity of the situation and for countries with an instinct of self-preservation". There had been no ideological clashes since all concerned wished to remain out of the present conflict and no bloc had been formed since "blocs are too rigid and worth little when a crisis comes".

FILED
FEB 13 1940

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770.00/746

The only thing that had changed concluded the MESSAGGERO was the spirit of entente which had become an "instrument for Balkan solidarity not the defense of Rumania against possible Bulgarian claims". Gayda last evening appeared particularly intent upon disproving any interpretation of the communique as presaging the formation of a Balkan bloc. The communique according to Gayda left the position of each member state as before and "in substance confirms all that is already common knowledge regarding the Balkan situation. In its general lines it confirms that atmosphere of peace which largely through Italy's influence has to date been preserved in the Balkans despite numerous adverse circumstances." Gayda averred that there was "no longer any talk of a Balkan bloc as the British and French press had in the past predicted under a more or less accentuated Italian chairmanship which the Fascist Government had never sought". He concluded that "without formal agreements the policy of the Balkan states coincides in notable aspects with the trends of Italian policy. No pressure close or remote is being exercised by Italy. Unquestionably present however is Italy's influence manifested with the example of her attitude and serene firmness and with the power of attraction of her constructive work".

PHILLIPS

CSB

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 6 1940
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSM
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br.)

FROM Athens

Dated February 6, 1940

Rec'd 11:43 a. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

19, February 6, 4 p. m.

The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs said to me this morning that the Belgrade conference revealed a complete harmony of views and while promising more definite information after the return of the Premier, offered what he called his "impressions" of what constituted "the cream". He said that the talks indicated a more decided leaning toward France and England on the part of Yugoslavia than the other states had anticipated; that there is a possibility of reviving the Rumanian neutral bloc proposals in another form but still including an approach to Hungary and Bulgaria; that without going so far as a military accord at (*) time all four states are eager to consult together if one is threatened with attack from without; and that confidence is increasing not only in Bulgaria's declaration of neutrality but also in her throwing in her lot with the other Balkan

states

770.00/747

FEB 9 1940

GML

states if war should come. He stated that Yugoslavia had been pleased to note that the others and especially Turkey do not desire the constitution of an eastern front as an offensive move against Germany and that altogether the conference was favorable to France and England so long as the latter's policy remains limited to blocking aggression in this area.

MACVEAGH

HPD

(*) apparent omission

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 15 1940
DIVISION OF FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

FROM

HSM
A portion of this telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br.)

Moscow

Dated February 6, 1940

Rec'd 3:55 p. m.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

148, February 6, 6 p. m.

(GRAY) The Soviet press, while refraining from direct editorial comment, has followed closely the recent meeting in Belgrade of the Foreign Ministers of the Balkan Entente. Tass despatches reporting the meeting have contained incidental comments emphasizing the alleged efforts of "the Franco-British war bloc" to subordinate the Balkan Entente to its aims against Germany and especially to prevent the establishment of economic collaboration between the Balkan countries and Germany. These despatches have likewise indicated approval of the decisions of Bulgaria and Hungary in refusing to attend on the grounds that the Balkan Entente under French and British pressure is insistent upon the maintenance of the Versailles territorial status quo in the Balkans to the detriment of Bulgaria and Hungary. A Tass despatch from Sofia published in the leading Moscow newspapers today emphasizes

the

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FEB 19 1940
GML

the view that despite the intensive efforts of England and France, represented by the Turkish Foreign Minister at this meeting, to bring the Balkan Entente under their political and economic control, as a weapon against Germany and to enlarge the Entente to include Hungary and Bulgaria, these designs have met with complete failure. The despatch concludes that there is no reason to anticipate that because of this failure the "Anglo-French war bloc" will cease its efforts in the Balkans and that in the future even further and more extensive efforts in this direction may be expected. (END GRAY).

In general the Soviet press has treated the meeting of the Balkan Entente in a somewhat objective manner and none of the accounts or comments has made any direct reference to Soviet interests in the Balkans. However, the constant emphasis in the Soviet press on the alleged desire of England and France to draw the Balkan countries into the orbit of the war and the indirect support of Bulgarian and Hungarian revisionist claims appear to reflect the general lines of Soviet policy in the Balkans.

Repeated to Belgrade.

STEINHARDT

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JI
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to any one. (br!

FROM BELGRADE

Dated February 6, 1940

Rec'd 8:40 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 8 1940
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 7 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State

Washington

37, February 6, 7 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

CONFIDENTIAL

From various Balkan official sources we have obtained the following information: nothing sensational took place at recent Balkan Entente meeting but the results were entirely satisfactory and should serve as effective groundwork for more effective cooperation in the future in the interest of peace, neutrality, and closer relations with Bulgaria, Hungary, and Italy.

Only the four foreign ministers were present at the meetings, five in all, not even diplomatic representatives here or private secretaries being present. The conversations were more in the nature of informal exchange of impressions rather than diplomatic discussions. The formation of a neutral bloc, Rumanian-Yugoslav relations, the political and relations of the members of the Entente with

belligerent

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FEB 9 1940

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belligerent powers were not discussed. It was recognized that a discussion of these and other controversial subjects would lead to innumerable divergences of opinion and that it would be impossible for four members of the permanent council to arrive at any common policy.

Due to Turkey's position vis a vis the allies it was considered unwise to make references to Hungary, Bulgaria, and Italy in the official communique for which all four Entente members were responsible. By allowing the Rumanian and Yugoslav Foreign Ministers to make such references in their speeches they alone are officially responsible, even though Greek and Turkish representatives unofficially approved the texts thereof. (This explains why the meeting was held prior to February 9 when the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs becomes president of permanent council)

Gafenco's reference to a "regional Entente" shows that he still hopes that his project of a Balkan and Danubian bloc may be realized. This is not possible as long as Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria withhold their approval.

(END SECTION ONE)

LANE

NPL

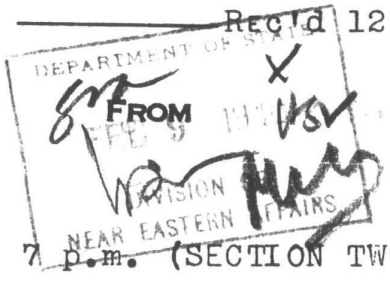
RFP
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

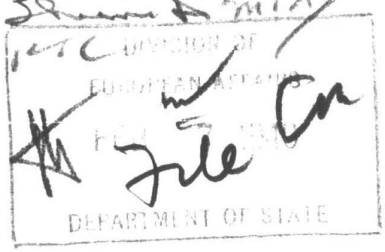
Belgrade

Dated February 6, 1940

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Rec'd 12:20 a.m., 7th





Secretary of State

Washington

37, February 6, 7 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

Other Balkan Entente states were delighted with Yugoslavia's cooperative attitude in contrast with her position at last Balkan Entente meeting when she "held back" and showed a suspicious attitude towards Turkey in particular. Change is probably due to Italy's support of the aims of the Entente and to Germany's approval of Balkan policy of peace and neutrality. (Greek Minister advised me that German Minister, who had just returned from Berlin, recently emphasized German Government's desire to maintain status quo in the Balkans, provided the Balkan States should continue to furnish Germany with adequate amount of raw products as at present and should take no unneutral action against Germany.)

No decision was taken regarding attitude to be assumed by Entente in the event that one of the four states were attacked. The various potential combinations of aggression, neutrality, etc., are so numerous that

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FEB 12 1940

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that it was believed useless to consider them especially in view of lact of time. Should one of the states be attacked the four Foreign Ministers could meet at very short notice to make a decision.

The Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs was evidently very much pleased with his talk with Kiosseivanov at Sofia and with the assurances he received that Bulgaria would cooperate with the Balkan Entente and would do nothing to disturb the peace in southeastern Europe, leaving territorial claims for future peaceful negotiation.

Hungary which did not desire the conference to be a success was disappointed by the attitude of Italy which now is cultivating good relations with Rumania. Hungary feels especially sore at being let down by Germany with respect to Slovakia and by Italy at Venice (when Ciano told Csaky that peace in southeastern Europe is a far more important question than Hungarian territorial aspirations). The Hungarian Minister here has reflected the bitter attitude of his Government by referring to its decision to obtain satisfaction from Rumania, by force if necessary, as soon as the war is over.

I hope to be able to telegraph Yugoslav reactions tomorrow.

Repeated to Rome, Bucharest and Ankara.

LANE

CFW:ROW

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 7 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSM ——— GRAY

FROM Berlin

Dated February 7, 1940

Rec'd 11:20 a. m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 8 1940
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

770.00/750

Secretary of State,

Washington.

324, February 7, 11 a. m.

My 312, February 5, 5 p. m.

770.00

Commenting on the recently concluded Balkan conference along the same lines previously followed by the German press the latest issue of the Foreign Office DDPK mentions the suggestions being made in London following the unsatisfactory results of the Balkan conference viewed from the British standpoint for the conclusion of a "Black Sea pact" between Turkey and Bulgaria and Rumania which would be aimed exclusively against Russia. The DDPK says that efforts of this nature to compromise the Balkan States will be watched with the greatest attention and it is observed that at least up until now these countries have properly read "the signs of the times".

FEB 9 1940

KIRK

CSB

GML

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM BELGRADE

Dated February 7, 1940

Rec'd 6:47 p. m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Secretary of State,

Washington.

39, February 7, 4 p. m.

My 37, February 6, 7 p. m.

The Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs commented to me today substantially as follows regarding recent developments:

(One) As the Minister for Foreign Affairs and he prophesied to me prior to the Balkan Entente meeting, the conference produced no sensation but it did create a better understanding in southeastern Europe.

(Two) The Permanent Economic Council of the Balkan Entente will probably meet in April or May to discuss such matters of mutual interest as trade balances and railway, postal and telegraphic communications. It is not as yet known whether Bulgaria will be invited to participate.

(Three) No decision was taken at the meeting here regarding the attitude of the Entente in the event that one of its members were attacked.

(Four)

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FEB 12 1940

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(Four) Bulgaria has made known that she desires her territorial demands settled. Realizing that she cannot attain her aims at the time she has agreed to postpone the question until the close of the war.

(Five) Hungary is dissatisfied but she is principally to blame for her present condition as she will never state concretely and specifically what her desires are. Talking of the return of all of Transylvania to Hungary or of a Hungarian frontier on the Carpathians puts the matter outside of discussion.

(Six) Italian-Turkish relations are now normal and correct principally because of mutual distrust of Soviet aims. The two governments cannot for the moment become cordial for two reasons: (1) Italy is jealous of the preponderance of any other Mediterranean power and; (2) Italy cannot afford to provoke the ill will of Germany by becoming friendly to a quasi-ally of France and Great Britain. (I am following this matter closely and expect shortly to report more fully).

(Seven) Fotic reported to his Government that the American press had given excellent coverage to the Balkan Entente conference.

Repeated to Rome, Ankara.

LANE

EMB

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

GRAY

FROM Budapest

Dated February 7, 1940

Rec'd 7:58 p. m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

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FEB 10 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

36, February 7, 7 p. m.

The communique issued at the adjournment of the Balkan block conference produced a storm of editorial comment against the statement regarding the mutual safeguarding of the "integrity of national territory". PESTER LLOYD published an editorial of Foreign Office origin demanding a clarification of the statement failing which Hungary would have to interpret it as meaning the maintenance of the status quo. Hungary would not defer indefinitely the pressing of her claim for revision and her benign attitude toward the conference could not be regarded as a sign of weakness in this regard.

MONTGOMERY

EMB

FEB 12 1940

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GML

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM

BELGRADE

Dated February 8, 1940

Rec'd 6:46 p. m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 2 1940
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 9 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

40, February 8, 6 p. m.

~~CONFIDENTIAL.~~

770.00/733

770.00/739

770.00

My telegram No. 26, January 26, 6 p. m., and Ankara's 9, January 31, 4 p. m.

In the past few days we have had conversations with Yugoslav, Turkish, Italian and Papal officials, all of whom indicate that a considerable improvement has already taken place in Italian-Turkish relations and that a greater cordiality will follow.

It is true, as reported by Ambassador MacMurray, that the Turks have little if any confidence in Italian assurances of friendship. Nevertheless, realizing that Italian foreign policy is based purely on self-interest they feel that Italy will wish to align herself on the side of the victor's in the World War, that is, with the allies and with Turkey. This does not necessarily mean that Italy will enter the war; but that Italy desires to maintain the closest relations possible, compatible with her

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FEB 14 1940

her dignity, with the victorious nations.

The arrival of a Turkish economic delegation in Rome which will discuss commercial matters of considerable magnitude is deemed illustrative of increased Italian-Turkish cooperation.

The Papal Nuncio referred this morning to the greatly improved relations between Great Britain and Italy which according to him make improved Italian-Turkish relations "inevitable". The Nuncio, who until now has always shown an anti-ally bias is now openly anti-Hitler due, I infer, to Hitler's recent boasts that he is allied to "the atheist Stalin" and to his having read Rauschnigg's book on Hitler. Due to Monsignor Felici's close connections with the highest authorities in Rome I consider as significant his statement that the Italian Government, despite its polite official statements towards Germany, in reality hates the present German regime. The Turkish Ambassador who is an objective observer without pronounced leanings for the Allies confirmed this point of view to me this afternoon. Both of these sources stated that Italy need no longer look to Berlin for instructions as to foreign policy.

741.65

It is realized here that considerable time may elapse before

before psychological and political difficulties will be surmounted to effect a real and practical understanding between Italy and Turkey. Our sources indicate however, with a conviction which is impressive, that definite steps are on foot to eradicate all existing difficulties between these two Mediterranean powers especially because of their common attitude toward the Soviet Union and because of their joint belief that the Allies will eventually be victorious. Italy's continuance as an oceanic power is dependent upon cooperation with Great Britain and France.

Repeated to Rome and Ankara.

LANE

JWR

NK

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Balkans. Speech by Italian Foreign Minister, Count Ciano on December 16th, indicating assurances that Italy would be a factor for peace and tranquillity in the Danubian Basin and the Balkans.

770.00/754

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See ---Des. #1321---
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated ---Jan.4,1940--- From / To ---Turkey (MacMurray)

File No. ---765.00/170---

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

No. 1321

Istanbul, Turkey,
January 4, 1940.

Subject: Reaction of the Turkish Press to the Italian Foreign Minister's Speech of December 16th.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that although considerable space was devoted by the Turkish press to reporting Count Ciano's speech of December 16, 1939, the latter provoked little in the way of original editorial comment.

Probably with a view to learning the effects of the Italian Foreign Minister's remarks on the press of Great Britain and France, the Turkish press waited until December 18th before embarking on its own comments. In general it may be said that the Turkish press, which was almost unanimous in considering that Count Ciano's speech

<u>lacked</u>

lacked precision and clearness from the point of view of Italo-Turkish relations, viewed the exposé of Italian foreign policy neither with concern nor with acclamation. It derived some comfort, however, from the Italian Minister's assurances that Italy would be a factor for peace and tranquillity in the Danubian basin and in the Balkans.

With regard to specific comments, few seem to merit special attention, although the following may be of some interest to the Department.

In concluding his comments on the Italian Foreign Minister's speech, Ahmet Şükrü Esmer, political editor of the semi-official Ankara daily ULUS, stated on December 18th that in his estimation it placed more responsibility on Germany than on the western democracies for the outbreak of the war. He considered that the possibility of placing such a construction upon Count Ciano's remarks was important as an index to present Italo-German relations which, he infered, have never yet recuperated from the shock they received when "Germany sought the cooperation of the USSR." A similar view was also expressed by Nadir Nadi in an editorial appearing in the CUMHURIYET. Mr. Nadi also remarked that Count Ciano's address was unsatisfactory inasmuch as it did not provide adequate indications of the course which Italian foreign policy will follow in future.

Ahmet Us, writing in the VAKIT (December 18th) paid more attention to Count Ciano's remarks concerning Turkey than any of his journalistic colleagues. He emphasized

<u>that</u>

that "Count Ciano has recalled, with regard to Turkey, that the Turco-Italian Treaty of Friendship, signed in 1938, is still in force. He denied reports recently published in certain Italian newspapers to the effect that the annexation of Albania had opened Italy's way to the Straits and the Black Sea. To hear one of the most authoritative Italian statesmen say that not only the letter but also the spirit of the Turco-Italian Treaty of Friendship remains in force is a precious contribution to peace in the Mediterranean and the Balkans."

With further regard to Italy's relations with the Balkan countries, S. R. Emeq in an editorial which appeared in the SON POSTA of December 20th, stated that "what Mr. Ciano has said concerning the Danubian basin and the Balkans is of considerable importance. There is no vital reason why Italy's desire to show its good intentions towards the peoples of this part of Europe should not have a speedy response; but it is essential that this desire should proceed from a policy which holds itself aloof from any idea of opposing the equality of rights of these peoples. As long as Italy's intentions in this regard remain unclarified it will be impossible to foster a real policy of peace and security in the Danubian basin and in Eastern Europe -- that is to say, in the Balkan Peninsula".

Respectfully yours,

J. V. A. MacMURRAY.

Copies sent to:
American Embassies at Rome, Paris and London;
American Legations at Athens, Belgrade, Budapest, Bucharest and Sofia.

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JLB:er

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Italian foreign policy in Yugoslavia, communism in Yugoslavia, and coming regular meeting of the Balkan Entente.
Conversation with the Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs, concerning -.

rr

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See ~~#833~~
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated ~~Jan. 5, 1940~~ From / To ~~Yugoslavia (Lane)~~

File No. ~~860h.00b/61~~

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

770.00/755

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RFP
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

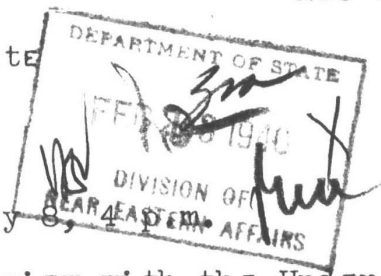
FROM Bucharest

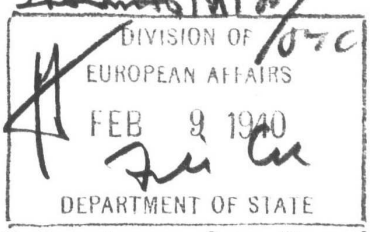
Dated February 8, 1940

Rec'd 12:58 a.m., 9th

Secretary of State

Washington





25, February 8, 4 p.m.

770.00

In an interview with the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs who accompanied Gafencu to the Balkan Entente Conference he expressed the Rumanian Government's entire satisfaction with the results of the meeting. He said that nothing sensational had been expected except by newspaper correspondents but the very fact that the meeting had been held at such a critical time proved the sincerity of the peaceful desires of the members. No controversial questions had been discussed nor had it been possible to plan in detail a future course of policy because of the divergent interests of the members, Rumania and Yugoslavia being neutral and Greece and Turkey non-belligerents but two concrete results had been obtained: (1) complete unanimity of view regarding the maintenance of peace and neutrality in the Balkan area; (2) the expression of a sincere desire for better relations between the Entente members and Bulgaria and Hungary. In reply to a question he said the second point did not envisage

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FEB 14 1940

visage territorial concessions which were impossible due to the uncertainty of the future situation but that once peace had been obtained the question would be discussed. Meanwhile every other effort would be exerted to improve relations.

In reply to a further question regarding the meaning of Gafencu's reference to a "regional entente" he said that in spite of all stories to the contrary Rumania had presented no proposal for such a "juridical" body. Gafencu felt in view of the evident desire among the members of the Entente for the maintenance of peace and the friendly cooperation among neighboring states, an attitude shared by Italy, Bulgaria and to a certain extent Hungary, that such a neutral block did in fact already exist. From his remarks I take it that this question will not be pressed further by Rumania for the present.

I commented on the very friendly references to Italy in the final speeches and was told that while no mention of this feeling was made in the official communique Gafencu had spoken on behalf of all the members and the expressions of gratitude were quite sincere. In this connection there are indications here of rapid improvement in relations between Rumania and Italy.

The Conference has been well received by the press

which

which is not unusual in view of the rigid control but the expressions of satisfaction have been very general among all classes of government leaders.

Morale has greatly improved here during the past three weeks. I believe this is due to the opinion that the successful Finnish campaign has lessened temporarily Russian pressure, greater certainty as to Bulgaria's peaceful attitude because of better Turkish-Bulgarian relations, a feeling of greater unity among the Balkan States and improved relations with Italy. There is no confirmation here of the stories frequently repeated in the foreign press that Germany has given Rumania a guarantee vis a vis Russia. It would seem that Germany desires peace in this area as long as her source of supply is kept intact. There will however be increasing friction as the allies attempt to block that source but Rumania for the present is relying for the maintenance of her neutrality on her age-old ability to hedge and dodge.

HIBBARD

CFW:ROW

~~EEN~~ ~~NE~~ EO

RFP
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

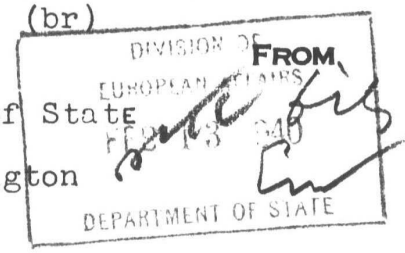
Ankara

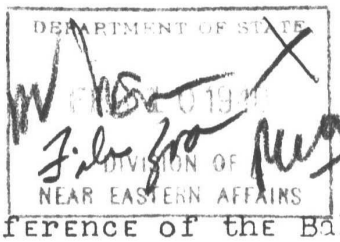
Dated February 9, 1940

Rec'd 8:07 p.m.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS FEB 13 1940 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FROM





Secretary of State

Washington

DEPARTMENT OF STATE FEB 20 1940 DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

13, February 9, 6 p.m.

770.00

One. The results of the conference of the Balkan Entente, although admittedly not spectacular, are extremely gratifying in the view of the Turkish Government as set forth to me today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. His conferences in Sofia on the way to Belgrade enabled him to convey to his Balkan colleagues satisfactory assurances that the Bulgarian Government is sincere in the feeling of community of interests with its neighbors and in its willingness to look to their good will for an eventual adjustment of territorial claims. This attitude on the part of Bulgaria enabled the conference (even while making no juridical change in the terms of what originated as a defensive alliance against Bulgaria) to act on the assumption that under existing circumstances the Balkan States have all a common interest in seeking means to preserve the peace and the integrity of the whole peninsula, the development of this conception was in itself a real gain even though no attempt was made to give effect to it in new concrete understanding. It is also felt that

impulsion

770.00/757

FILED

GML

impulsion was given to a useful development of intra-Balkan trade to be worked out at the meeting (to be held in Athens in a month or so, possibly with a Bulgarian representative attending) of the annual economic conference which has hitherto dealt only with minor questions.

Two. The Minister said that results of the conference had apparently been satisfactory not only to the Balkan States themselves and to the allies, but to everybody else. It had been up to a certain point the object of considerable disparagement and disruptive intrigue on the part of the Germans who however, seemed later to have realized that it represented a sufficient moral force to make antagonism inadvisable. The Italians had been distinctly lukewarm in advance but had in the end been very greatly pleased. Even the Russians (although the new spirit of Balkan unity might be considered to set up a counter weight to possible Soviet pretensions) were reported by the Turkish Embassy in Moscow not to be displeased with the results and the Hungarian Minister had just informed the Foreign Office that while his Government had at first regarded it unfavorably as an attempt to eternalize the boundaries against Hungary, it had now come to understand and sympathize with its purpose of seeking to create unity of feeling and purpose with regard to the immediate essentials, while leaving in abeyance without prejudice the

regional

regional disputes which have hitherto prevented such unity.

Three. Turkish representive feels certain that the resulting situation makes the extension of the war to southeastern Europe far less likely.

MACMURRAY

NK:EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FROM

jt
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

BELGRADE

Dated February 10, 1940

Rec'd 2:17 p.m.

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
FEB 12 1940
MR. WELLES

SECRETARY OF STATE
FEB 12 1940
NOTED

Secretary of State,

Washington.

42, February 10, 11 a.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY AND UNDER SECRETARY.

The Prince Regent expressed satisfaction to me last evening regarding the results of the Balkan Entente meeting. He said that it is a move in favor of peace. Nevertheless he indicated from some of his remarks he is not sanguine that peace will be maintained in the Balkans.

When I suggested that one of the good results of the meeting was the amelioration of relations between Italy and the Balkans, he remarked, "I wonder". He said that Italy's attitude is confusing: Italian statesmen continually reiterate their desire for a strong Yugoslavia; on the other hand Ciano has privately expressed himself that Communism exists here and that Italy is going to take action regarding Yugoslavia. Very recently, the Prince said, he has had additional proof that the Italian Government is disseminating communist propaganda here. He expressed the opinion that his

visit

770.00/758
FILED
FEB 13 1940
CONFIDENTIAL FILE
GML

visit to Zagreb may have finally convinced the Italian Government that Yugoslavia cannot be broken up. Although convinced that the Italian people desire peace, he said that in totalitarian states the wishes of the people do not count. He said with evident bitterness that Italy pretends to need living space in the Balkans. He added sarcastically that Yugoslavia also needs living space, in China perhaps.

I asked him regarding Italian-Turkish relations. He said that they are correct but nothing more. He admitted, however, that as soon as Italy is convinced which side will win the war Italy will cultivate the friendship of the victors and the victors' friends. Until a few months ago Mussolini was convinced that Germany would win the war. The Finnish situation may have changed his point of view, however.

He expressed his deep regret that the United States has not lent more effective aid to Finland to enable the Finns to buy war materials. He said that even though our Congress may finally vote credits he fears it may be too late to save Finland and ultimately Scandinavia.

REPEATED TO ROME

LANE

NPL

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JT
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM

ATHENS

Dated February 12, 1940

Rec'd 5:03 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 13 1940
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

26, February 12, 6 p.m.

My No. 19, February 6, 4 p.m.

In further discussion of the Belgrade conference the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs this morning characterized as "most important" the Bulgarian assurances of parallel policy and postponement of territorial (*). He stated that these assurances were far more categorical than any yet given by the Bulgarian Government and included the statement that Bulgaria will fight to defend her territory if this is threatened by Germany or Russia. Hardly less important he said, was the feeling of solidarity occasioned by the discovery that none of the Entente states desires to commit the group to any other policy than that which is already being followed. Agreeing with an impression I have recently found general among my colleagues the Under Secretary now thinks that neither the Allies nor the Germans desire to extend the war into this area. He thinks the Allies are not yet strong enough to attack nor sure enough of Italy's attitude while the Germans

are

770.00/759

are still getting more supplies from this region than they could count on for a long time after an invasion. Russia, he thinks, cannot afford another military adventure now. There is some danger in the present situation, however, in that the Allied economic blockade may reach such proportions as to provoke a drive by Germany to keep open her sources of supply.

MACVEAGH

NPL:EMB

(*) Apparent omission

EW

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NE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

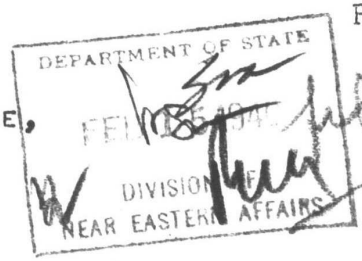
JT
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

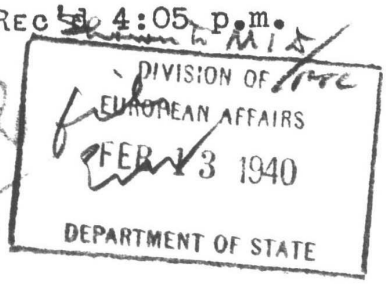
FROM

BELGRADE

Dated February 12, 1940

Rec'd 4:05 p.m.





Secretary of State,

Washington.

47, February 12, 5 p.m.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed to me this morning his great satisfaction regarding the results of the Balkan Entente meeting. He said that it had been decided at the meeting to invite Bulgaria to participate in the meeting of the Permanent Economic Council of the Balkan Entente which would meet in April or May. He said that a further sign of economic collaboration between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria is shown by the arrival in Belgrade of a Bulgarian delegation in connection with the opening of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce.

He stated that Bulgaria is showing a reasonable attitude in the postponement of territorial aspirations until after the war. Hungary on the other hand will not state precisely what its territorial aims are. Rumania is not in a position today to make territorial concessions to Bulgaria as such a move would immediately bring about renewed demands from Hungary. Likewise it cannot afford to make any concession to Hungary so as not to offend Bulgaria.

FILED
FEB 19 1940

LANE

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CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Turkish Ambassador said that since outbreak of hostilities, Italy realizes that its best interests lie in preservation of Balkan peace and its policy becomes more nearly identical with that of Turkey.

770.00/761

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel.#97 6 p m
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Feb. 10 1940 **From / To** Italy (Phillips)

File No. 765.67/557

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

bb

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT

A letter from a Supreme Soviet deputy published today expressed strong disapproval of Turkey's policy at Balkan Entente meeting, alleging that under orders from London, Turkey advocated a defensive union which would involve the Balkans in war on the side of the Allies.

770.00/ 762

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel.#160 2 p m
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Feb. 9 1940 **From / To** U.S.S.R.(Steinhardt)

File No. 761.67/262

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

bb

JT

GRAY

MOSCOW

Dated February 9, 1940

Rec'd 3:30 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

160, February 9, 2 p.m.

Soviet dissatisfaction with the present course of Turkish policy and in particular the role of Turkey in the recent meeting of the Balkan Entente was strongly set forth in a letter from a deputy to the Supreme Soviet published in TRUD today - a favorite device of the Soviet Government publicity to views without assuming official responsibility therefor. This letter, after discussing the familiar argument that the "British and French imperialists" had attempted to use the Soviet Turkish negotiations of last autumn for the purpose of rekindling hostility between Germany and the Soviet Union and that the Anglo-French-Turkish pact subsequently signed was contrary to the real interests of Turkey, states that "at the session of the Balkan Entente, Turkey under orders from London advanced the idea of a defensive union which was designed to involve the Balkan countries in the war on the side of the Anglo-French bloc." The author then discusses Soviet-Turkish relations and, after reviewing

the

the 20 year friendship which has existed between the two countries and which corresponded to the real interests of the Turkish people, states that the present attitude of the Turkish Government is "incomprehensible", but that however "the policy of Turkey during recent times convinces us that the leaders of this country have decided to follow the example of England and France, incendiaries of war, to the detriment of the interests of the Turkish people." In conclusion, the author warns Turkey of the consequences of this policy since "historic facts testify that a game of this type always ends in catastrophe".

Repeated to Ankara.

STEINHARDT

CSB

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Balkan Conference.
Rumors current in foreign capitals to the effect that Hungary would send an observer to this conference have been denied, but the local press insists that the Itali-Hungarian understanding and working agreement must play a preponderant role in future developments in Southeastern Eruope.

rr

770.00/763

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See #1991
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Jan. 20, 1940 From / To Hungary (Travers)

File No. 864.00 P.R./175

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RFP
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM

Sofia

Dated February 13, 1940

Rec'd 10:50 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

11, February 13, 6 p.m.

During an interview with the Prime Minister this morning I inquired regarding the significance to Bulgaria of the Balkan Entente meeting at Belgrade.

He referred to the implied agreement to consult should external frontiers of Balkan Entente countries be threatened which he described as an extension of the sphere of the Entente. He emphasized that the word "integrity" was omitted from the communique issued after the meeting and that this left the door open for Bulgaria to discuss territorial claims. As against these points his Government had noted with regret and disappointment that the Entente which was essentially against Bulgaria had been extended for seven years. He said that when the Turkish Foreign Minister passed through Bulgaria on his way to Belgrade he expounded Bulgaria's case regarding the Dobrudja and on his return from Belgrade he informed the Prime Minister that he had placed the whole matter before the meeting. The Rumanian Foreign Minister said that his country was unwilling now to consider the

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FEB 20 1940

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return of that province but he agreed that this claim unlike the Russian and Hungarian ones was "legitimate" and promised to "lay it before his Government." In reply to my question the Prime Minister said that this was the first time a Rumanian Foreign Minister had admitted the justice of this claim before the members of the Entente. He added that the conference had taken note of Bulgaria's "loyal attitude" in not pressing its claim at this precarious juncture.

In my opinion the Prime Minister has been adroit both in bringing about a formal consideration of Bulgaria's claim and in causing the conference to take cognizance of Bulgaria's willingness to postpone consideration of her claims until such time when it may be done without jeopardizing peace in the Balkans.

Asked whether he did not think the Russian menace to Bessarabia had greatly diminished he fully agreed, adding that he believed the Germans had succeeded in causing the Russians to delay any action against that province.

In speaking of the possibility of an eastern front the Prime Minister mentioned that the Turkish assurances to Bulgaria provide that as long as this country remains neutral Turkey will not only respect her neutrality

767.74

neutrality but will prohibit the passage through eastern Thrace of any foreign troops.

Asked how he felt in general about prospects for maintaining peace in the Balkans, he replied that at the present time they seemed more favorable and he was hopeful.

MILLARD

NPL:CFW

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE UNDER SECRETARY

February 7, 1940

February 8 1940

Let to President enclosing letter to Lane

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 7 1940
EW: RDC: EJD
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

2/8/40

770.00

Eu - Mr. Hickerson:

Please draft some appropriate reply which I may send to the President for his signature.

U:SW:IJ

FILED
FEB 15 1940

Eur

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 6, 1940.

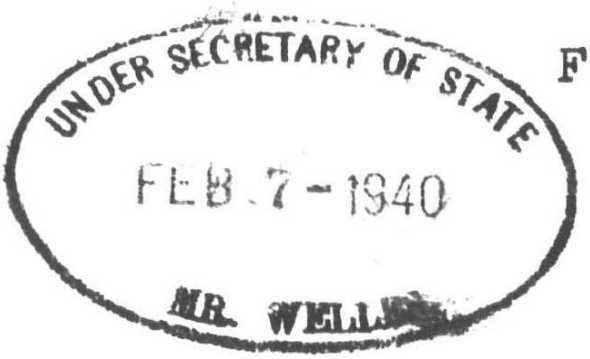
MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR PREPARATION OF REPLY

FOR MY SIGNATURE.

F. D. R.



770.00

C O P Y

Legation of the

United States of America

Belgrade, January 5, 1940.

My dear Mr. President;

I trust that this may reach you in time for your birthday to bring to you my very best wishes for the day, this year and for many, many more years. You would be greatly enheartened in your endeavors to promote a better understanding among nations, to know how deeply your efforts are appreciated in countries such as Yugoslavia. Prince Paul never fails to speak of your wisdom in your policy.

The people here are apprehensive over the possibility of a military adventure against Yugoslavia in the spring. In general Germany, Italy and the Soviets are equally feared; but in government circles Italy is considered to be the big bad wolf. Italy's attempts to show that communism exists here is reminiscent of her excuse for intervening in Spain.

Believe me, my dear Mr. President, with cordial regards and respectful good wishes.

Very faithfully yours

ARTHUR BLISS LANE

770.00/765

FEB 15 1940

B

C O P Y

Legation of the

United States of America

Belgrade, January 5, 1940.

My dear Mr. President;

I trust that this may reach you in time for your birthday to bring to you my very best wishes for the day, this year and for many, many more years. You would be greatly enheartened in your endeavors to promote a better understanding among nations, to know how deeply your efforts are appreciated in countries such as Yugoslavia. Prince Paul never fails to speak of your wisdom in your policy.

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Believe me, my dear Mr. President, with cordial regards and respectful good wishes.

Very faithfully yours

ARTHUR BLISS LANE

February 8 1940

770.00

My dear Mr. President:

I enclose a draft letter for your signature in reply to Arthur Lane's letter of January 5 from Belgrade.

Faithfully yours,

Sumner Welles

Enclosures:
1. Draft letter;
2. From Arthur Bliss Lane, January 5, 1940.

CR

FEB 8 1940 PM

The President,

The White House.

Eu:RDC:EJD 2/8/40

A true copy of the signed original

770.00/765 B

My dear Lane:

Thank you very much for the message you sent me on my birthday.

I was interested in Prince Paul's reaction to our foreign policy, and it is gratifying to know that our efforts to create a better relationship between nations are appreciated.

The recent Balkan Conference in Belgrade from first appearances does not appear to have been the death feast that had been expected. There still seems to be life in the Entente and the four member States are apparently endeavoring to stick together in the face of the threats to their independence and integrity. I need hardly say that I am following closely the march of events in Southeastern Europe.

Should a suitable occasion arise will you please convey to Prince Paul my good wishes for him and Yugoslavia.

With my personal regards,

Very sincerely yours,

The Honorable
Arthur Bliss Lane,
American Minister,
Belgrade.

FEB 8 1940 PM

Eu:RDC:EJD 2/8/40

My dear Lane:

Thank you very much for the message you sent me on my birthday.

I was interested in Prince Paul's reaction to our foreign policy, and it is gratifying to know that our efforts to create a better relationship between nations are appreciated.

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Should a suitable occasion arise will you please convey to Prince Paul my good wishes for him and Yugoslavia.

With my personal regards,

Very sincerely yours,

The Honorable
Arthur Bliss Lane,
American Minister,
Belgrade.

Eu:RDC:EJD 2/8/40

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Recent Belgrade meeting of the Balkan Entente;

Rochat characterized the,- which did not alter the situation in the slightest nor merit the extensive publicity the meeting received.

mr

770.00/ 766

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. #186, 7 p.m.
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Feb. 8, 1940 From/To France (Murphy)

File No. 740.0011 European War, 1939/1630

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS FEB 19 1940 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM Athens

Dated February 15, 1940

Rec'd 2 p.m.

Telegram to Legation 2/17/40 GVA/LS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE File Copy FEB 16 1940 DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Secretary of State,

Washington.

29, February 15, 4 p.m.

The Prime Minister told me in strict confidence this morning that the Belgrade conference actually extended the application of the Balkan Pact to cover the eventuality of attack by outside powers. When I asked him if this had been put in writing or merely agreed to verbally he said "we cover everything we do with proces-verbaux", he then characterized the Entente as being "no longer what it used to be" and as "an obstacle to the descent of Germany or Russia into the Balkans" and added that no meeting of the general staffs is likely for the present as plans have already been agreed upon.

He pointed out that under existing circumstances in Europe the importance of the new agreement lies in the fact that it binds Turkey and Greece to aid the northern members of the group, see my telegram No. 8, January 13, and stated that their obligation is in no way contingent on what Bulgaria may decide to do.

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FEB 20 1940

The Prime Minister described the new Russian and German commercial agreement as of capital importance and as indicating that the initiative has again passed to Germany as a result of Russia's ill success in Finland. He thinks Germany has at present no intention of attacking either in the west or in this region and that she will do her best to keep Russia from doing the latter. Italy's attitude he described as now genuinely neutral, her cooperation with Germany being a thing of the past. Under these conditions he regards the Balkan situation as definitely improved and safe "for the moment."

MACVEAGH

KLP

X

PREPARING OFFICE
WILL INDICATE WHETHER

Collect { Full rate / Day letter / Night letter

Charge Department:
Full rate
Day letter
Night letter

Charge to
$

TELEGRAM SENT

Department of State

TO BE TRANSMITTED
CONFIDENTIAL CODE
NONCONFIDENTIAL CODE
PARTAIR
PLAIN

Washington,

1940 FEB 17 PM 2 43

This cable was sent in Confidential Code. It should be [illegible] before being communicated to anyone. Br

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

February 17, 1940

3 pm

AMERICAN LEGATION,

ATHENS (GREECE).

26

Unless you perceive objection please repeat first two paragraphs of your telegram no. 29, February 15, 4 p.m., to Belgrade, Bucharest and Ankara with the Department's request for comment regarding Metaxas' important statement.

Hull

NE GVA/LS

770.00/767

CR

FEB 17 1940 PM

770.00/767 B

Enciphered by _____

Sent by operator _____ *M.*, _____, *19*____, _____

1—1462 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS FEB 17 1940 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JT
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM BELGRADE

Dated February 16, 1940

Rec'd 6 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE FEB 20 1940 DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

MR. DUNN DEC 20 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

53, February 16, 3 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

770.80

The Bulgarian Minister here, Ivan Popoff, who has just been appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs is considered to be one of the best informed diplomats in Europe on Balkan affairs. He is shrewd, firm but not stubborn, and peacefully inclined.

He is a student of world affairs and is a theorist rather than a practical man. He is indirect in his approach to a question and has on occasion spent more than an hour in endeavoring to convey a point by insinuation(see my 740.0011 E.W.1939/910 despatch No. 716 of September 28, 1939, page four). He is distrustful of Rumania but irritated at Yugoslavia's distrust of Bulgaria. Although he has the reputation of being strongly pro-German and perhaps pro-Soviet, I think his attitude is more accurately described as resentful towards the allies because of the treaty of Neuilly. While his entire frankness is open to question, I consider that he was

honest

770.00/768 FILED FEB 23 1940 GMR

honest when he recently told me that he is opposed to the establishment of Communism in Bulgaria. He is unquestionably friendly towards the United States.

761.62111/169

Please see my telegrams 237, September 2, 1 p.m.; 770.00/663 342, November 15, 11 a.m. 1939, and 14, January 12, 7 p.m. 861.24574/3 for his expressions of views regarding the international situation. I am reporting subsequently regarding the reaction of the Yugoslav Government.

REPEATED TO SOFIA.

LANE

NPL

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Athens, January 26, 1940.

No. 3748.

Subject: Greek Delegation to the Meeting of the Balkan Entente at Belgrade.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 26 1940
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 3 1940

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
FEB 20 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
1940 FEB 16 PM 3 42

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

770.00

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-M-C
FEB 21 1940
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the Premier, Mr. Metaxas, plans to leave Athens on January 30 for the annual meeting of the Balkan Entente to be held at Belgrade February 2 - 4. Because of the uncertain rail communications, the delegation will travel as far as Salonika by steamer. The membership of Mr. Metaxas' delegation is as follows:

Mr. Leon Melas,

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GMR

FILED
MAR 7 1940

Mr. Leon Melas, E. E. and M. P., Chief of the Division of Political Affairs of the Foreign Office;

Mr. Basil Papadakis, Minister Resident, Director of the Section of International Problems and Exchange of Information;

Mr. Leonidas Gafos, Director of the Section for Balkan Affairs;

Mr. Pindar Androulis, Director of the Secretariat of the Prime Minister;

Colonel Nobelis, Aide-de-camp of the Prime Minister.

A half-dozen Greek journalists, hand-picked by the delegation, will arrive in Belgrade two or three days before the conference opens. Events nowadays occur with such rapidity that any occurrences of importance must be reported by telegraph. Nevertheless it may be worth placing on record that the usual preliminary consultations are scheduled to take place. Thus it is understood that Mr. Saradjoglou, en route from Istanbul to Belgrade, will confer with Mr. Kiosseivanoff in Bulgaria, and an hour or two after leaving the Bulgarian frontier will meet Mr. Metaxas at Nisch, continuing together the journey to Belgrade. From the recent visit of Mr. Menemencioglou, Secretary General of the Turkish Foreign Office, to Sofia, and the subsequent protestations of good will, both in Ankara and in Sofia, it is clear that the Turkish delegation will be thoroughly posted concerning the Bulgarian point of view, regardless of whether a Bulgarian "observer" is present at the conference.

The impression of ten days ago that not much could be expected of the conference has now given way to the realization that in view of the critical changes in the situation

since

since the last regular meeting, any group consultations of the heads of these four Governments are sure to give them an incentive to examine whether their mutual problems can find a general solution. Their situation is not altogether similar. To some, Bulgarian adherence would be a great satisfaction, to others the price seems high. As regards the threat of war, Turkey is more exposed by definite engagements, Rumania more immediately endangered by the recent evolution of events, and Yugoslavia equally unprotected against either the covetousness or expediency of stronger neighbors. With this unhappy spirit prevailing, comes also the bad news that the German chiefs of mission in the Balkan countries have been called to Berlin for consultation before the conference meets.

Respectfully yours,

Lincoln MacVeagh.

File No. 800.

CWC/hec

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

MA

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br)

FROM

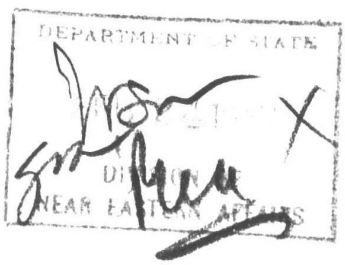
BELGRADE

Dated February 21, 1940

Rec'd 8:55 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington



56, February 21, 5 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

A confidential source has shown me the text of the proces-verbal of the recent meeting of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente at Belgrade. The following is the substance of the seven points.

(1) It is affirmed that the four Balkan Entente countries pursue an identical aim, the maintenance of peace.

(2) It is affirmed that according to existing information peace in the Balkans is not endangered, at least for the present.

(3) It is affirmed with satisfaction that the relations between the members of the Balkan Entente have ameliorated during the past year and that Italy has shown the same desire as have the Balkan countries of maintaining peace, order, and security.

(4) The four Ministers for Foreign Affairs are in agreement on the fact that the basis of effective security of each

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of each of the four allied countries lies in the strength of mutual understanding and of their union. Consequently the common feeling has been created that the Balkan Entente has a mission which passes beyond its present Balkan activity and which should tend to the creation of a community of thought, of interests and of activity among the four countries.

(5) The Council of the Balkan Entente expresses the hope of improving through common efforts the relations of the four countries with Bulgaria and Hungary.

(6) The Council of the Balkan Entente ratifies the decisions which were taken during the Seventh Session of the Economic Council and will continue its work for the development of commercial and economic relations between the four countries.

(7) It is decided that the Balkan pact shall be renewed for a period of seven years as from February 9, 1941.

Cipher texts mailed to Rome, Budapest, and Balkan capitals.

LANE

NPL

MA

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

BELGRADE

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br)

FROM

Dated February 21, 1940

Rec'd 10:40 p.m.

Seen by MID

Secretary of State

Washington

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
770.00/767

57, February 21, 6 p.m.

With reference to Athens' Number 29, February 15, 4 p.m. and to the Department's telegraphic instruction through Athens in connection therewith.

770.00

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Although Yugoslav officials as well as Turkish Ambassador and Greek Minister claim that no agreement was made in Belgrade covering the eventuality of an attack on members of the Balkan pact by outside powers it is not impossible that the matter was discussed in the secret meetings between the four foreign ministers. According to the proces-verbal the substance of which I am telegraphing in a separate message there would appear to be no definite stipulation regarding mutual military assistance. Paragraph four, however, does suggest the possibility that the activities of the Balkan pact shall go beyond the Balkans in the future. Despite the intimations of President Metaxas that the proces-verbal is binding it is our opinion that a hypothetical attack on a member of the Balkan Entente could not require the assistance of other members unless a formal agreement were

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signed to that effect. I am assured that no such document was signed. (In this connection see my telegram Number 33, February 3, 1 p.m. paragraph four and my telegram 37, February 6, 7 p.m.)

According to the Greek Minister, Metaxas brought out during the discussions here the position of Greece at the time of the occupation of Albania by Italy. He quoted Metaxas as stating that Greece mobilized then without consulting other members of the Balkan Entente and that in the event of an attack against a Balkan state the state attacked would have to take appropriate action to protect its own interests.

A Balkan colleague informs me that in the event that Germany should attack Rumania the four members of the Balkan pact would confer, with the result that Yugoslavia would remain neutral while Greece and Turkey would attack Bulgaria.

The Turkish Ambassador tells me that the reason there will be no meeting of the general staffs is that Yugoslavia presumably under the pressure or because of apprehension of Germany vetoed the proposal at the recent meeting in Belgrade. Yugoslavia gave the excuse that the Chief of Staff (General Simovich) was then too busy with fortification construction and other matters on national defense.

Repeated to Athens.

NPL

LANE

few Ed

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM

HSM
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br.)

Bucharest

Dated February 23, 1940

Rec'd 1:30 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

44, February 23, 1 p. m.

767

I have now received the text of Minister MacVeagh's interesting telegram No. 29 of February 15, 4 p. m., which just missed our courier at Sofia. Am planning a discreet inquiry but it may be some days before I shall feel in a position to comment authoritatively.

GUNTHER

KLP

Re Balkan Pact

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FEB 26 1940

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 2012

Budapest, February 7, 1940.

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SUBJECT: Balkan Conference.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 8 1940
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 24 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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ONI
FEB 28 1940

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RECEIVED
FEB 23 1940
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
FEB 26 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-MAIL
FEB 27 1940
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE

770.00

770.00/773

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

B

Sir:

I have the honor to report that prior to the convening of this conference, the Permanent Assistant to the Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed to me his pessimism regarding its outcome. The deliberations, he felt, might be directed against Hungary, and he appeared to

have

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MAR 5 1940

have little faith in Yugoslavia's making any efforts in Hungary's behalf despite the growing rapprochement between the two countries.

The press expected nothing sensational to occur at Belgrade and considered the significance of the conference to lie in its economic deliberations. Certain journals drew a parallel between the Little Entente and the Balkan Bloc, pointing out that the former's disregard of any point of view other than anti-revisionism had caused its ruin. MAGYAR NEMZET declared that the Balkan conference was not competent to decide the vital issues in Southeastern Europe; still less competent to decide matters concerning Hungary. Semi-official PESTER LLOYD said editorially that Hungary was able to solve her problems without mediation (see my telegram No. 28 of February 1, 1940).

The communiqué issued at the end of the conference produced a storm of editorial protest against the statement regarding the identity of views of the four States "in the matter of independence and integrity of the national territory", although the conference was seen to have achieved no special result and to have had a significance only of a negative nature.

A summary translation of this press reaction is enclosed. 1/

Semi-official

Semi-official PESTER LLOYD of February 6 published an editorial marked to indicate its
2/ Foreign Office origin, of which a translation
3/ and summary thereof are enclosed.

In essence, the apparent attitude of the Balkan Entente to maintain the status quo was deplored, and a clarification of the term "national territory" was demanded. Hungary, it said, could not postpone indefinitely the question of Transylvania, and her benign attitude toward the conference of the Balkan Bloc should not be taken as a sign of weakness in this regard.

Respectfully yours,

John F. Montgomery

Enclosures:

1. Summary translation of Press Reaction.
2. Translation of editorial in PESTER LLOYD of February 6, 1940.
3. Summary translation of Enclosure 2.

In quintuplicate.

Legation file 710

Enclosure No. 1 to despatch
No. 2012 of February 7, 1940
from the American Legation,
Budapest, Hungary.

SUMMARY TRANSLATION
of Hungarian Press Comment Regarding
Balkan Bloc Conference.
(Budapest Press of February 6,1940)

Editorial comment, echoing the Foreign Office statement in PESTER LLOYD, denounced the statement in the final communiqué of the Conference regarding the safeguarding of "national territory", which they assumed to mean a maintenance of the status quo, but they also regarded it as equivocal. Otherwise, the consensus was that the Conference had accomplished little or nothing, and had not altered the existing situation. The Government-subsidized UJ MAGYARSAG considered no change in the friendly relations between Hungary and Yugoslavia to have resulted from the Conference and it accused Rumania of having been the intransigeant influence thereat.

"Territoire national" could be interpreted only as signifying "State frontiers" and, therefore, it could be considered only that the Conference had insisted rigidly upon the principle of the status quo (NEMZETI UJSAG). Was this notion a result achieved by friends or by stubborn opponents? However, "the insertion of the term 'national territory' in the diplomatic vocabulary often in future will heat the political atmosphere of South East Europe"(UJ MAGYARSAG). The term might be interpreted differently, though there was the possibility that it was written into the communiqué solely to make the latter more obscure (MAGYARSAG).

No special results were achieved by the conference save the prolongation of the Balkan Bloc. The Member States agreed that they did not wish to become involved in a war but they failed to decide upon a common economic policy and they could not agree on the subject of transportation (NEMZETI UJSAG). The importance of the conference lay more in the things which did not take place. There remained the status quo which, in its present form, could not prevail. Peace endeavors were reaffirmed, but they of themselves were no guarantee against war. The mutual defence alliance of the Bloc became stronger, but it was not made clear just what should be defended jointly. The necessity for the friendship of neighboring States was emphasized, but the prerequisites for such friendship were not provided (UJ MAGYARSAG).

The

The significance of the conference was of a negative nature (NEMZETI UJSAG). Everything remained as it was, in a state from which good and bad equally may follow easily (UJ MAGYARSAG). The communiqué was a typical example of the diplomatic tactics, "there you have zero, make the most of it"! The term "national territory" was the only one worthy of discussion (MAGYARSAG). It was a case of "much ado about nothing". The Balkan Bloc now remained the only guardian of the Paris suburb treaties and of the status quo which already had been condemned by London and Paris (MAGYAR NEMZET).

Hungaro-Yugoslav understanding had not grown out of the Balkan Bloc. Yugoslavia had shown understanding and a sense of reality at the conference, as she had in the days of the Little Entente, and it was this realistic policy which had won her the confidence and sympathy of Hungary. On the contrary, it was Rumania, not Hungary and Bulgaria, who should understand, in the interest of peace in South East Europe, that times had changed (UJ MAGYARSAG).

Enclosure 2 to Despatch No. 2012
of February 7, 1940 from the
American Legation at Budapest.

TRANSLATION OF EDITORIAL ENTITLED
"HUNGARY'S ATTITUDE"

(PESTER LLOYD, February 6, 1940).

"Ever since Hungary could and had to pursue a policy of her own, she consistently stuck to one course: she endeavored always to bring about an accord between her particular interests and those of Europe as a whole, and undisturbedly to tend towards peace in the Carpathian basin to be built up on juster and more reasonable bases. Within the framework of such policy, to further points of view decisive for Hungarian foreign policy since the outbreak of the present European war: on the one hand to prevent that war spread to Southeastern Europe and, on the other hand, to leave nothing untried in order to banish from this territory the difference which harbor the germs of future conflicts and which might preclude the establishment of lasting peace, and finally to assure that no such conditions evolve here either which might prejudice an improvement of the present situation.

"These basic principles clearly prescribed to the Kingdom of Hungary and to its foreign political leaders what their practical policy should be for the future. Thus Hungary was from the outset opposed to the formation of a Southeastern bloc of which there was so much talk, because she was of the opinion that such bloc might provoke the suspicion of a Great Power, as it could be easily suspected that such bloc would not solely serve the interests of peace but also might be a pretence for particular, even imperialistic, interests. Besides, such a bloc necessarily would lead to the formation of a counter-bloc. Hungary was of the opinion that it was quite sufficient if the will to maintain peace prevailed in the States concerned, and that this will be expressed at concrete opportunities for doing so, these States simultaneously avoiding any provoking statement irreconcilable with the spirit of genuine peace. We call provocation or provoking statement, e.g. certain troop movements at the frontiers, exaggerated emphasizing of certain frontier fortification works, the persecution of a minority of the nationality of a neighboring country. Yes, one cannot help to consider as provocation even the superfluous emphasis of the attitude of rigid refusal of certain States with regard to a readjustment of territorial problems which would in its final effect serve the future peace not only of the States concerned but also of the whole Continent, it being the case of a territorial readjustment, the necessity whereof already had become common knowledge.

"A

"A conscientious tuning in of Hungarian interests to those of Europe as a whole has been a tradition of many centuries for this country, its beginning coinciding with the conversion to Christianity and the coronation of the first King. We have never concealed the fact that certain stipulations of the Treaty of Trianon had carried out atrocious injustices on which no serious and lasting peace could be built up. Today we believe to be able emphatically to declare that there is not a single competent statesman left in Europe who would contradict us in this; on the contrary, the various leading statesmen both of the belligerent and of the neutral States, repeatedly declared that for reasons of public interest the status quo must change. In one respect this was accomplished, and to be sure there is no argument one might use that the same principle should not be applied also in another, rather well-known, direction.

"Just recently the complete accord of Hungarian and Italian foreign policy in this respect was expressed at the Venice meeting. At the same time it was clear to any political observer that Hungary - for the very reason that Hungarian foreign policy does not serve any particular but general European interests - does not try to increase the present difficulties of our Continent by raising this question, which is bound to be solved, at a time when its solution is not yet timely from the general European point of view. Nobody could have the slightest doubt, however, that we will raise this question at a time which will be propitious for future lasting peace, and that we are backed in this not only by our well-known friends but also by all the reasonable and competent political factors of the whole world. It is actually an elementary duty of our Country to carry through the solution of this problem. Hungary considers the solution of the territorial problem, still pending and directly affecting her, the more important because she is fully conscious of the fact that she was placed by history in a part of Europe so much exposed to danger, where for a thousand years she had ample opportunities to make good as defender of European civilization and legal order against an onslaught from many sides. Hungary is prepared also for the future loyally to comply with this her mission in the interest of Europe, and, we might also add, also with the consent of the whole of Europe. The stronger, in consequence, the Realm of St. Stephen, the safer Europe may feel that the peaceful Hungarian bulwark of defence maintains unshaken also in future.

"The European situation appeared to Hungary in this light when the Balkan Conference convened for this year's session at Belgrade.

"Hungary

"Hungary had taken note of the Balkan bloc as of an existing structure; she had never taken any unfriendly attitude towards it and, on her part, had done everything to evolve, with regard to one or the other of its member States - this particularly refers to Yugoslavia - the friendliest and most understanding neighborly relations. Such spirit prevailed in Hungary's attitude also with regard to the fact that the member States of the Balkan bloc discuss amongst themselves the questions which are of particular interest to them, and that they endeavor even to develop their common interests according to necessity. There was not the slightest objection on the part of Hungary to the circumstance that the Foreign Ministers in their statements to the press, and even in their toasts, expressed perfect mutual accord. It did not even escape the notice of the Hungarian public that on this occasion friendly words were said also with regard to Hungary and her great friend Italy.

"All of this, however, is unessential; the gist of the matter is in the following:

"The foreign policy of Hungary is a generally known factor. The so-called Hungarian problem has by now become an inevitable element of a general European readjustment. Hence Hungary, and with her all those who are sincerely concerned about the creation in Southeastern Europe of conditions which might serve as a basis for a future lasting European peace, would have liked to see any indication promising hope in this respect, appear at the Belgrade Conference. In the present situation, when the Foreign Ministers of the four Balkan States emphasize the identity of their views, one cannot help asking oneself from the point of view of general European interests, in what consists the identity of these views? Do the parties concerned agree among themselves that it is their duty to eliminate the poisonous germs of possible future wars, or do they agree that they wish to preclude the evolution of a new and better Europe built up on juster bases? Unfortunately, the final communiqué of the conference seems to confirm the latter theory, unless there soon appear indications - even in the form of a favorable interpretation - throwing a ray of light on this gloomy picture.

"Namely, the third point of the final communiqué reads: 'The members of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Bloc state their will to remain united within the framework of the pact which pursues its own aims and is not directed against anybody, and jointly to endeavor to safeguard the rights of each Member State in the matter of independence and integrity of the national territory'.

"This

"This point dangerously reminds one of the spirit which had prevailed in the Little Entente of yore and the untenability whereof was sufficiently demonstrated. Gafencu, the Rumanian Foreign Minister, did casually remark, though, that the Balkan States and some outside Powers might settle their problems by regional agreements. We could see some practical help in this only if the aforementioned, so ominous, point were not the equivalent of persistence in the status quo. Assuming that the State concerned, let us take Rumania for example, understands by 'national territory' the region in which the Rumanian people live and not the region in which also pure Hungarians numbering 1.8 million live, then a regional pact to be signed would in fact serve the pacification of the two States and hence the establishment of European peace.

"If, however, by 'national territory' the whole of the present territory of a State inhabited also by large Hungarian masses, is meant, then truly it is labor lost to waste even a single word about other points of agreement.

"If people should not yet know, all of those who may have an influence over the future shaping of Europe should take note of the fact that Hungary cannot be dealt with on a Trianon basis - which the Balkan Entente so far at least has not professed and with which she did not feel linked up - in a case where nearly two millions of Hungarians separated from their nation live beyond the frontier. The patience of Hungary and her readiness not to add to the difficulties of our Continent in the present difficult times should not delude anybody into believing that Hungary is prepared to postpone ad graecas calendas the settlement of this problem of vital interest. Hungary is in this respect conscious of the justice of her cause, of her duty, of her European mission, and also of the fact that Hungarian foreign policy in this respect is sure of the full approval of her friends who understand and know properly to gauge the importance of these problems.

"We would regret it if the attitude of Hungarian official and non-official circles towards the Balkan Conference had made some people wrongly believe that the European mentality of the Hungarians was a sign of weakness. Thus it remains an open question whether it was right, in this hour, with regard to Hungary, by the modification of the present legal state of things in peius to take the road of heedless provocation."

Enclosure No. 3 to despatch
No. 2012 of February 7, 1940
from the American Legation,
Budapest, Hungary.

SUMMARY TRANSLATION
of Editorial Entitled "Hungary's Attitude".
(PESTER LLOYD, February 6,1940)

Since achieving her independent nationality, Hungary consistently had striven to harmonize her particular interests with general European interests, in the cause of peace.

Hungary had opposed the formation of a South East European Bloc because she suspected it would not serve the sole interest of peace. The will to peace of the several countries, and their expression thereof, were sufficient to maintain peace if the States refrained from provocative acts and statements (such as had been made by Rumania).

The injustices of the Treaty of Trianon now were appreciated and all competent and disinterested statesmen in Europe declared that the status quo had to be changed for reasons of public interest.

At Venice, Hungarian and Italian foreign policy had shown agreement on this point. Hungary had not raised the question of revision because she did not regard it as timely or as serving general European interests. However, she surely would press for a solution of the problem at a time propitious for future, durable peace. In a dangerous geographical position, she had fought for European civilization through the years, and would continue to do so. Hence, a strong Hungary was a European interest.

So Hungary saw the European situation at the opening of the Balkan Bloc Conference.

Hungary had endeavored to cultivate friendly relations with the States of the Balkan Bloc, particularly with Yugoslavia. This attitude she carried to the discussion by these States of "their common interests according to necessity", and she did not object to their expressions of perfect mutual accord.

Since the Hungarian problem was an inevitable element in a general European adjustment, Hungary and all those interested in seeing the creation of conditions in South East Europe which made for future peace, wished to see some hopeful expressions regarding it emanate from the Balkan Conference. In what consisted the identity of view of the four Balkan States? The final communiqué of the Conference had to be interpreted as meaning that they wished to preclude the evolution of a better Europe built on just bases, unless they were to make favorable interpretation to the contrary.

Objection

Objection was had to the statement of the communiqué regarding the unity of the Bloc in its "endeavor to safeguard the rights of each Member State in the matter of independence and integrity of the national territory".

This sounded like an echo of the spirit of the Little Entente. The Rumanian Foreign Minister had said that the Balkan States and some outside States might settle their problems by regional agreements. If the communiqué did not mean the maintenance of the status quo, and if "national territory" were interpreted to mean the regions wherein lived the Rumanian people, not that inhabited by Hungarians, a regional pact signed on this basis would conciliate the differences between Rumania and Hungary.

A different interpretation of "national territory" would preclude agreement. Hungary could not be dealt with on a Trianon basis in the problem of her nearly two million brethren living in Rumania. Her patience in not pressing her revisionist claims in these difficult times in Europe should not delude anybody into believing that Hungary indefinitely would postpone the settlement of this problem of vital interest. Her cause was just and her policy had the approval of her friends.

The Hungarian attitude towards the Balkan Conference erroneously had been taken in some circles as a sign of weakness, and it was a question as to the right of the Balkan States to make a heedless provocation by making worse the existing legal state of things.

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Enclosure No. 1 to despatch
No. 2012 of February 7, 1940
from the American Legation,
Budapest, Hungary.

SUMMARY TRANSLATION
of Hungarian Press Comment Regarding
Balkan Bloc Conference.
(Budapest Press of February 6,1940)

Editorial comment, echoing the Foreign Office statement in PESTER LLOYD, denounced the statement in the final communiqué of the Conference regarding the safeguarding of "national territory", which they assumed to mean a maintenance of the status quo, but they also regarded it as equivocal. Otherwise, the consensus was that the Conference had accomplished little or nothing, and had not altered the existing situation. The Government-subsidized UJ MAGYARSAG considered no change in the friendly relations between Hungary and Yugoslavia to have resulted from the Conference and it accused Rumania of having been the intransigeant influence thereat.

"Territoire national" could be interpreted only as signifying "State frontiers" and, therefore, it could be considered only that the Conference had insisted rigidly upon the principle of the status quo (NEMZETI UJSAG). Was this notion a result achieved by friends or by stubborn opponents? However, "the insertion of the term 'national territory' in the diplomatic vocabulary often in future will heat the political atmosphere of South East Europe"(UJ MAGYARSAG). The term might be interpreted differently, though there was the possibility that it was written into the communiqué solely to make the latter more obscure (MAGYARSAG).

No special results were achieved by the conference save the prolongation of the Balkan Bloc. The Member States agreed that they did not wish to become involved in a war but they failed to decide upon a common economic policy and they could not agree on the subject of transportation (NEMZETI UJSAG). The importance of the conference lay more in the things which did not take place. There remained the status quo which, in its present form, could not prevail. Peace endeavors were reaffirmed, but they of themselves were no guarantee against war. The mutual defence alliance of the Bloc became stronger, but it was not made clear just what should be defended jointly. The necessity for the friendship of neighboring States was emphasized, but the prerequisites for such friendship were not provided (UJ MAGYARSAG).

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The significance of the conference was of a negative nature (MAGYAR UJSAG). Everything remained as it was, in a state from which good and bad equally may follow easily (UJ MAGYARSAG). The communiqué was a typical example of the diplomatic tactics, "there you have zero, make the most of it"! The term "national territory" was the only one worthy of discussion (MAGYARSAG). It was a case of "much ado about nothing". The Balkan Bloc now remained the only guardian of the Paris suburb treaties and of the status quo which already had been condemned by London and Paris (MAGYAR NEMZET).

Hungaro-Yugoslav understanding had not grown out of the Balkan Bloc. Yugoslavia had shown understanding and a sense of reality at the conference, as she had in the days of the Little Entente, and it was this realistic policy which had won her the confidence and sympathy of Hungary. On the contrary, it was Rumania, not Hungary and Bulgaria, who should understand, in the interest of peace in South East Europe, that times had changed (UJ MAGYARSAG).

Enclosure 2 to Despatch No. 2012
of February 7, 1940 from the
American Legation at Budapest.

[redacted] ARTICLE ENTITLED
"HUNGARY'S ATTITUDE"

(PESTER LLOYD, February 6, 1940).

"Ever since Hungary could and had to pursue a policy of her own, she consistently stuck to one course: she endeavored always to bring about an accord between her particular interests and those of Europe as a whole, and undisturbedly to tend towards peace in the Carpathian basin to be built up on juster and more reasonable bases. Within the framework of such policy, to further points of view decisive for Hungarian foreign policy since the outbreak of the present European war: on the one hand to prevent that war spread to Southeastern Europe and, on the other hand, to leave nothing untried in order to banish from this territory the differences which harbor the germs of future conflicts and which might preclude the establishment of lasting peace, and finally to assure that no such conditions evolve here either which might prejudice an improvement of the present situation.

"These basic principles clearly prescribed to the Kingdom of Hungary and to its foreign political leaders what their practical policy should be for the future. Thus Hungary was from the outset opposed to the formation of a Southeastern bloc of which there was so much talk, because she was of the opinion that such bloc might provoke the suspicion of a Great Power, as it could be easily suspected that such bloc would not solely serve the interests of peace but also might be a pretence for particular, even imperialistic, interests. Besides, such a bloc necessarily would lead to the formation of a counter-bloc. Hungary was of the opinion that it was quite sufficient if the will to maintain peace prevailed in the states concerned, and that this will be expressed at concrete opportunities for doing so, those states simultaneously avoiding any provoking statement irreconcilable with the spirit of genuine peace. We call provocation or provoking statement, e.g. certain troop movements at the frontiers, exaggerated emphasizing of certain frontier fortification works, the persecution of a minority of the nationality of a neighboring country. Yes, one cannot help to consider as provocation even the superfluous emphasis of the attitude of rigid refusal of certain States with regard to a readjustment of territorial problems which would in its final effect serve the future peace not only of the States concerned but also of the whole Continent, it being the case of a territorial readjustment, the necessity whereof already had become common knowledge.

"A conscientious tuning in of Hungarian interests to those of Europe as a whole has been a tradition of many centuries for this country, its beginning coinciding with the conversion to Christianity and the coronation of the first King. We have never concealed the fact that certain stipulations of the Treaty of Trianon had carried out atrocious injustices on which no serious and lasting peace could be built up. Today we believe to be able emphatically to declare that there is not a single competent statesman left in Europe who would contradict us in this; on the contrary, the various leading statesmen both of the belligerent and of the neutral States, repeatedly declared that for reasons of public interest the status quo must change. In one respect this was accomplished, and to be sure there is no argument one might use that the same principle should not be applied also in another, rather well-known, direction.

"Just recently the complete accord of Hungarian and Italian foreign policy in this respect was expressed at the Venice meeting. At the same time it was clear to any political observer that Hungary - for the very reason that Hungarian foreign policy does not serve any particular but general European interests - does not try to increase the present difficulties of our Continent by raising this question, which is bound to be solved, at a time when its solution is not yet timely from the general European point of view. Nobody could have the slightest doubt, however, that we will raise this question at a time which will be propitious for future lasting peace, and that we are backed in this not only by our well-known friends but also by all the reasonable and competent political factors of the whole world. It is actually an elementary duty of our Country to carry through the solution of this problem. Hungary considers the solution of the territorial problem, still pending and directly affecting her, the more important because she is fully conscious of the fact that she was placed by history in a part of Europe so much exposed to danger, where for a thousand years she had ample opportunities to make good as defender of European civilization and legal order against an onslaught from many sides. Hungary is prepared also for the future loyally to comply with this her mission in the interest of Europe, and, we might also add, also with the consent of the whole of Europe. The stronger, in consequence, the Realm of St. Stephen, the safer Europe may feel that the peaceful Hungarian bulwark of defence maintains unshaken also in future.

"The European situation appeared to Hungary in this light when the Balkan Conference convened for this year's session at Belgrade.

"Hungary

"Hungary had taken note of the Balkan bloc as of an existing structure; she had never taken any unfriendly attitude towards it and, on her part, had done everything to evolve, with regard to one or the other of its member States - this particularly refers to Yugoslavia - the friendliest and most understanding neighborly relations. Such spirit prevailed in Hungary's attitude also with regard to the fact that the member States of the Balkan bloc discuss amongst themselves the questions which are of particular interest to them, and that they endeavor even to develop their common interests according to necessity. There was not the slightest objection on the part of Hungary to the circumstance that the Foreign Ministers in their statements to the press, and even in their toasts, expressed perfect mutual accord. It did not even escape the notice of the Hungarian public that on this occasion friendly words were said also with regard to Hungary and her great friend Italy.

"All of this, however, is unessential; the gist of the matter is in the following:

"The foreign policy of Hungary is a generally known factor. The so-called Hungarian problem has by now become an inevitable element of a general European readjustment. Hence Hungary, and with her all those who are sincerely concerned about the creation in Southeastern Europe of conditions which might serve as a basis for a future lasting European peace, would have liked to see any indication promising hope in this respect, appear at the Belgrade Conference. In the present situation, when the Foreign Ministers of the four Balkan States emphasize the identity of their views, one cannot help asking oneself from the point of view of general European interests, in what consists the identity of these views? Do the parties concerned agree among themselves that it is their duty to eliminate the poisonous germs of possible future wars, or do they agree that they wish to preclude the evolution of a new and better Europe built up on juster bases? Unfortunately, the final communiqué of the conference seems to confirm the latter theory, unless there soon appear indications - even in the form of a favorable interpretation - throwing a ray of light on this gloomy picture.

"Namely, the third point of the final communiqué reads: 'The members of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Bloc state their will to remain united within the framework of the pact which pursues its own aims and is not directed against anybody, and jointly to endeavor to safeguard the rights of each Member State in the matter of independence and integrity of the national territory'.

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"This point dangerously reminds one of the spirit which has prevailed in the Little Entente of yore and the untenability whereof was sufficiently demonstrated. Gafencu, the Rumanian Foreign Minister, did casually remark, though, that the Balkan States and some outside Powers might settle their problems by regional agreements. We could see some practical help in this only if the aforementioned, so ominous, point were not the equivalent of persistence in the status quo. Assuming that the State concerned, let us take Rumania for example, understands by 'national territory' the region in which the Rumanian people live and not the region in which also pure Hungarians numbering 1.8 million live, then a regional pact to be signed would in fact serve the pacification of the two States and hence the establishment of European peace.

"If, however, by 'national territory' the whole of the present territory of a State inhabited also by large Hungarian masses, is meant, then truly it is labor lost to waste even a single word about other points of agreement.

"If people should not yet know, all of those who may have an influence over the future shaping of Europe should take note of the fact that Hungary cannot be dealt with on a Trianon basis - which the Balkan Entente so far at least has not professed and with which she did not feel linked up - in a case where nearly two millions of Hungarians separated from their nation live beyond the frontier. The patience of Hungary and her readiness not to add to the difficulties of our Continent in the present difficult times should not delude anybody into believing that Hungary is prepared to postpone ad graecas calendas the settlement of this problem of vital interest. Hungary is in this respect conscious of the justice of her cause, of her duty, of her European mission, and also of the fact that Hungarian foreign policy in this respect is sure of the full approval of her friends who understand and know properly to gauge the importance of these problems.

"We would regret it if the attitude of Hungarian official and non-official circles towards the Balkan Conference had made some people wrongly believe that the European mentality of the Hungarians was a sign of weakness. Thus it remains an open question whether it was right, in this hour, with regard to Hungary, by the modification of the present legal state of things in peius to take the road of heedless provocation."

Enclosure No. 3 to despatch
No. 2012 of February 7, 1940
from the American Legation,
Budapest, Hungary.

SUMMARY TRANSLATION
of Editorial Entitled "Hungary's Attitude".
(PESTER LLOYD, February 6, 1940)

Since achieving her independent nationality, Hungary consistently had striven to harmonize her particular interests with general European interests, in the cause of peace.

Hungary had opposed the formation of a South East European Bloc because she suspected it would not serve the sole interest of peace. The will to peace of the several countries, and their expression thereof, were sufficient to maintain peace if the States refrained from provocative acts and statements (such as had been made by Rumania).

The injustices of the Treaty of Trianon now were appreciated and all competent and disinterested statesmen in Europe declared that the status quo had to be changed for reasons of public interest.

At Venice, Hungarian and Italian foreign policy had shown agreement on this point. Hungary had not raised the question of revision because she did not regard it as timely or as serving general European interests. However, she surely would press for a solution of the problem at a time propitious for future, durable peace. In a dangerous geographical position, she had fought for European civilization through the years, and would continue to do so. Hence, a strong Hungary was a European interest.

So Hungary saw the European situation at the opening of the Balkan Bloc Conference.

Hungary had endeavored to cultivate friendly relations with the States of the Balkan Bloc, particularly with Yugoslavia. This attitude she carried to the discussion by these States of "their common interests according to necessity", and she did not object to their expressions of perfect mutual accord.

Since the Hungarian problem was an inevitable element in a general European adjustment, Hungary and all those interested in seeing the creation of conditions in South East Europe which made for future peace, wished to see some hopeful expressions regarding it emanate from the Balkan Conference. In what consisted the identity of view of the four Balkan States? The final communiqué of the Conference had to be interpreted as meaning that they wished to preclude the evolution of a better Europe built on just bases, unless they were to make favorable interpretation to the contrary.

Objection

Objection was had to the statement of the communiqué regarding the unity of the Bloc in its "endeavor to safeguard the rights of each Member State in the matter of independence and integrity of the national territory".

This sounded like an echo of the spirit of the Little Entente. The Rumanian Foreign Minister had said that the Balkan States and some outside States might settle their problems by regional agreements. If the communiqué did not mean the maintenance of the status quo, and if "national territory" were interpreted to mean the regions wherein lived the Rumanian people, not that inhabited by Hungarians, a regional pact signed on this basis would conciliate the differences between Rumania and Hungary.

A different interpretation of "national territory" would preclude agreement. Hungary could not be dealt with on a Trianon basis in the problem of her nearly two million brethren living in Rumania. Her patience in not pressing her revisionist claims in these difficult times in Europe should not delude anybody into believing that Hungary indefinitely would postpone the settlement of this problem of vital interest. Her cause was just and her policy had the approval of her friends.

The Hungarian attitude towards the Balkan Conference erroneously had been taken in some circles as a sign of weakness, and it was a question as to the right of the Balkan States to make a needless provocation by making worse the existing legal state of things.

***

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bern, February 8, 1940

No. 1221

Subject: Transmitting article entitled "Rome and the Balkans" by P. Gentizon.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 26 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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FEB 29 1940

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
FEB 28 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

770.00/774

770.00

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-M/C
FEB 28 1940
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 1216 of January 31, 1940, transmitting a "Letter from Rome" by P. Gentizon, and to transmit herewith the text, in French, of an article by Mr. Gentizon which appeared in the GAZETTE DE LAUSANNE of February 6, 1940, entitled "Rome and the Balkans". A summary of the article, in translation, is likewise enclosed.

MAR 5 1940

Respectfully yours,

Leland Harrison.

Enclosures:
Text of article;
Translation.
File No. 800
CRH/mk
In quintuplicate

From GAZETTE DE LAUSANNE No. 36, February 6, 1940.

LETTRE D'ITALIE

(De notre correspondant particulier)

Rome et les Balkans

Rome, février.

Bismarck disait jadis de la question des Balkans : « Nous n'avons été que deux à la comprendre, moi... et un autre qui est devenu fou. » Le chancelier de fer exprimait sous cette forme humoristique la complexité des problèmes balkaniques. Cette caractéristique n'a point changé. Oyez plutôt : la carte politique des Balkans comporte aujourd'hui une entente balkanique composée de la Yougoslavie, la Roumanie, la Grèce et la Turquie. La Bulgarie n'en fait pas partie. Des Etats adhérents à l'Entente deux, la Roumanie et la Grèce, sont garantis unilatéralement par l'Angleterre et la France ; un autre, la Turquie, a des garanties bilatérales échangées avec Londres et Paris (pacte d'Ankara), tandis que la Yougoslavie n'est ni garante ni garantie. L'Albanie dépend de l'Italie. La Yougoslavie et l'Italie sont liées par un pacte d'amitié et de non-agression. L'Italie et la Grèce ont affirmé leur intention d'agir réciproquement en un sens de collaboration. Bref, on voit que pour parvenir à une entente générale, les pays balkaniques doivent résoudre d'importants problèmes. Mais, hâtons-nous d'ajouter que dans les circonstances actuelles et spécialement devant le danger que comporte la collusion germano-russe, les controverses qui existent entre les Etats balkaniques ne sont pas de nature à susciter des conflits. Aucun de ces Etats ne veut la guerre. Tous entendent observer leur neutralité de droit ou leur neutralité de fait. Mais, en même temps, les Balkans sont en contact direct ou indirect avec les grandes puissances belligérantes. Il y a contact direct avec l'Allemagne et avec la Russie : la première est limitrophe de la Yougoslavie, la seconde de la Roumanie. Il y a contact indirect avec la France et l'Angleterre puisque les Alliés ont garanti la Roumanie et la Grèce et ont conclu un pacte de mutuelle assistance avec la Turquie. Quoi qu'il en soit, les belligérants sont tous intéressés au développement de la situation balkanique. L'Allemagne entend protéger son ravitaillement sur les marchés roumains, yougoslaves et bulgares qui, avec le blocus maritime dont elle est frappée, lui sont devenus indispensables. Les Soviets ne dissimulent pas leurs visées vers les territoires qui ont appartenu autrefois à la Russie, en premier lieu la Bessarabie. La France et l'Angleterre cherchent à battre la concurrence allemande sur les marchés balkaniques de façon à soustraire à l'Allemagne les matières dont elle a besoin pour continuer la guerre. En outre, la France et l'Angleterre sont militairement intéressées à empêcher tout expansionnisme allemand ou russe vers les Détroits.

Dans ces circonstances, deux moyens s'offrent aux Etats balkaniques pour sauvegarder leur neutralité, leur indépendance et leur souveraineté. Le premier consiste à renforcer leur solidarité au point de former un véritable bloc balkanique, dans lequel tous les Etats de la péninsule résisteraient en commun automatiquement dans le cas où l'un d'entre eux serait menacé, envahi par une puissance extrabalkanique. Dans ce cas, l'entente entre la Yougoslavie, la Roumanie, la Grèce et la Turquie prendrait un tout autre aspect que celle consacrée par le pacte de 1934 ; elle ne fonctionnerait plus seulement pour les conflits interbalkaniques mais aussi contre les menaces extérieures. L'avantage du système serait une garantie absolue de l'indépendance et de la paix dans la péninsule balkanique. Ce serait en somme la solution idéale. L'Allemagne la redoute, car elle craint qu'une telle création ne constitue un faisceau de forces capables de se dresser contre elle, de mettre un frein au « Drang nach Osten » et de l'empêcher un jour de se tailler son fief en Orient. Le second moyen consiste à conserver le « statu quo » politique actuel, dans l'idée que la constitution d'un véritable et propre bloc pourrait être considérée avec suspicion par les belligérants et en conséquence aggraver les périls pour la neutralité, l'indépendance et la paix des Balkans. Le « satu quo » permettrait de satisfaire soit les intérêts des belligérants, soit les intérêts des Etats balkaniques qui éviteraient ainsi toute friction dangereuse avec les nations en guerre.

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Quelle est devant cette situation l'attitude de l'Italie ? Rappelons d'abord que c'est dans les Balkans que l'Italie, pour de multiples raisons, depuis le début du régime fasciste, n'a cessé de développer son prestige, de consolider, d'élargir ses positions. Aux yeux de Rome, la péninsule balkanique est non seulement une zone de ravitaillement, un « hinterland » économique, c'est aussi un boulevard pour l'Adriatique. La politique mussolinienne a déployé dans cette direction une action diplomatique, économique, culturelle même qui trahit un véritable effort constructeur. En fait, dans toute la péninsule balkanique, et spécialement depuis la mainmise sur l'Albanie, l'Italie s'est acquis une situation hors pair. C'est dans le cœur des Balkans que se trouve l'un des pôles de la politique italienne.

On comprend dans ces conditions que l'Italie soit contraire à une hégémonie quelconque de forces étrangères dans les Balkans. Sur ce point,

l'attitude de Rome s'adapte parfaitement aux aspirations des peuples balkaniques, qui visent avant tout au maintien de leur indépendance et de leur souveraineté. D'autre part, en écartant des Balkans les influences des autres grandes puissances, l'Italie peut toujours espérer jouer le premier rôle dans l'Europe sud-orientale et garantir ainsi ses intérêts et ses positions stratégiques entre l'Adriatique et l'Egée. Enfin, depuis la disparition de l'Autriche et de la Tchécoslovaquie, écartée dans une certaine mesure de l'Europe centrale, l'Italie est portée beaucoup plus qu'autrefois à défendre l'autonomie et l'indépendance des pays balkaniques qui sont devenus son propre « hinterland ». Son action est facilitée par la collusion germano-soviétique qui a soulevé de nombreuses craintes dans les Balkans.

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On pourrait croire que, dans ces circonstances, l'Italie devrait être portée à favoriser la constitution d'un bloc balkanique capable d'assurer l'indépendance du sud-est européen. Or, ce n'est pas le cas. En premier lieu, l'Italie juge qu'elle n'a aucun intérêt immédiat à une pareille création dans son voisinage adriatique. Un bloc de petits et moyens Etats correspond à une grande puissance et l'Italie est déjà flanquée de la France et de l'Allemagne. D'autre part, la direction d'un tel bloc pourrait lui échapper et tomber entre des mains hostiles. Pour ces raisons, l'Italie juge que ses intérêts lui dictent d'écarter l'idée d'une pareille construction et de poursuivre son action sur la base du «statu quo» politique actuel. A son avis, le système des pactes bilatéraux s'inspirant de la solidarité balkanique doit suffire pour garantir la sécurité de l'Europe sud-orientale et s'opposer à toute infiltration, à toute mainmise des grandes puissances. Elle se dit enfin que si, en constituant un bloc, les Balkans résistent à l'Allemagne sur le terrain économique, le fait pourrait constituer un grave danger. En ce domaine, elle paraît souhaiter que le Reich soit ravitaillé en pétrole de Roumanie, en chrome, cuivre de Yougoslavie, en même temps qu'en denrées alimentaires de toute l'Europe sud-orientale. Elle semble partir du point de vue qu'il est mieux pour la paix balkanique que l'Allemagne soit satisfaite économiquement par les marchés roumains, yougoslaves et bulgares. Dans le cas contraire, pense-t-elle, les conséquences pourraient être des plus sérieuses : le gouvernement hitlérien pourrait envisager une mainmise politique sur les Balkans et le gouvernement fasciste ne tient nullement à ce qu'une grande puissance quelconque s'impose dans une zone où prédominent les intérêts italiens. Bref, l'Italie estime que les Balkans peuvent préserver leur neutralité et leur indépendance en mettant une sourdine à leurs querelles intestines, en renvoyant leur revisionnisme à une époque meilleure, en satisfaisant économiquement l'Allemagne et en assurant leur solidarité par une série de pactes bilatéraux.

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Cette prise de position italienne soulève une foule de problèmes. La première question qui se pose est de savoir si en face des forces énormes qui gravitent autour des Balkans, une simple solidarité par pactes bilatéraux, c'est-à-dire une solidarité fractionnée, plus passive qu'active, plus formelle que substantielle, plus occasionnelle que constructive est suffisante pour sauver les Balkans. Les Alliés ne le croient pas. Une série d'exemples et d'expériences paraît leur donner raison. Dans d'autres circonstances, des groupements semblables, unis par des mêmes liens de fortune, n'ont pas résisté au choc des événements. La Petite Entente par exemple, qui avait pour but de s'opposer au revisionnisme hongrois, s'est écroulée au premier heurt contre l'Allemagne. De même l'entente entre la Pologne et la Roumanie, qui ne visait que la résistance contre une attaque russe, de même, l'entente entre les pays baltes aujourd'hui à demi-subjugués. Il en sera vraisemblablement de même pour les pays balkaniques s'ils se refusent d'organiser une commune défense contre les périls dont ils sont menacés. S'ils ne le font pas, ils ont de grandes chances de s'exposer au même péril que les pays de l'Europe centrale et de la Baltique. L'intérêt des Etats balkaniques paraît donc être de sortir de leur « statu quo » politique, d'écarter les formules régionales, d'élargir les objectifs de leur entente et d'instaurer entre eux une véritable assistance réciproque et générale.

P. Gentizon.

Letter from Italy

ROME AND THE BALKANS

Rome, February.

The Balkan question has not diminished since Bismarck declared that it had been understood by only two persons, himself and one other man who had gone insane. Today, we have the Balkan Entente, composed of Yugoslavia, Rumania, Greece and Turkey. Two of these States, namely, Rumania and Greece, have received unilateral guarantees from England and France, while Turkey has exchanged bilateral guarantees with London and Paris. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, has neither received nor given guarantees, but is bound by a treaty of friendship and non-aggression with Italy. Albania belongs to Italy, and Italy and Greece have declared their intention of following a course of collaboration. Nevertheless, in spite of internal differences and conflicting political orientation, all of the Balkan countries desire to maintain peace and neutrality in the face of the menace of German-Russian collusion.

On the other hand, all of the belligerents are directly interested in the Balkans: Germany, in maintaining her sources of supply in that region; France and England in cutting off German sources of supply and in preventing all German or Russian expansion toward the Straits; the Soviets in maintaining territorial claims, particularly to Bessarabia.

There are two ways for the Balkan States to defend their neutrality and independence: first, by transforming the Balkan Entente from an instrument designed merely to guard against inter-Balkan conflicts into a solid bloc of defense against external dangers; second, by conserving the "status quo" in an attempt to satisfy the interests of both the Balkan States and of the belligerents, and to avoid possible friction with the latter through the creation of a real Balkan bloc. The first is the ideal solution which would really guarantee independence and peace in the peninsula, but it is feared by Germany as a means of restraint to its "Drang nach Osten". The second solution is the policy which the Balkan States are pursuing at the present time.

What is Italy's attitude with regard to this situation in the Balkans? Since the advent of the Fascist regime, Italy has made a great effort to extend its influence in that region, which it regards as its own important economic and strategic "hinterland". Italy opposes, therefore, any foreign hegemony whatsoever in the Balkans, and in this respect shares the aspirations of the Balkan peoples themselves. Italy, on the other hand, is itself anxious to play the leading rôle in southeastern Europe, and its action in this direction is facilitated by the German-Soviet collusion which has aroused many fears in the Balkans. For this reason, Italy does not favor the development of a real Balkan bloc. Such a creation would be the equivalent of another great power, as an immediate neighbor to Italy, already flanked by Germany and France.

Control

Control over such a bloc, moreover, might escape Italy and fall into hostile hands.

Italy, therefore, favors the second solution of maintaining the "status quo" and believes that the present system of bilateral Balkan pacts is sufficient guarantee against foreign infiltration. Italy also holds that it would be dangerous for the Balkan States to resist Germany economically, to fail to deliver oil, copper, chromium and foodstuffs, because Germany would then be tempted to make sure of such supplies by extending its political control in that area.

Can the Balkans be saved by the partial solidarity provided by the bilateral pacts, the operation of which is more occasional than constructive? The Allies believe that this is not sufficient, and their point of view is supported by such examples as are offered by the fate of the Little Entente or of the Polish-Rumanian Entente, agreements which were limited to defense against particular dangers, but which crumbled at the first impact with German force. The true interest of the Balkan States would appear to be abandonment of the political "status quo" with its purely regional formulas and the establishment of a wider system of general and reciprocal assistance.

--P. Gentizon.

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 26 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF INFORMATION
MAR 26 1940
Department of State

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No. 1740 Rome, February 3, 1940.

Subject: French News Summary.

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FEB 29 1940

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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DIVISION OF CURRENT INFORMATION
MAR 27 1940
Department of State

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
FEB 27 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 25 1940
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-MA
FEB 27 1940
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that the French Embassy at Rome distributes a daily news summary to the other missions, to the Italian Press Bureau, and to a number of interested individuals. The summary is rarely more than four foolscap pages in length and, as might be expected, presents the news from the French point of view.

A member of the French Embassy has informed me how this news service is conducted. Every evening the Press Bureau of the French Foreign Office lays down the broad lines of the news it wishes to distribute in the various capitals of Europe. This summary is telephoned to its

missions

MAR 27 1940

GML

missions, including Rome. The individual mission then rewrites the article for local consumption, deleting anything that might offend local sensibilities and adding topical touches here and there. The final result is mimeographed and distributed by hand, gratis.

This system of distributing news from official sources results in effective propaganda. The articles are well written, the arguments are forceful, the news is presented logically. As a newspaper, it almost has the weight of an official journal.

The February 1 issue of this news summary devotes two pages to the announcement that France and Great Britain are now aligned with Secretary Hull in combatting economic nationalism by a return to more liberal principles of international commerce. A translation of this article is transmitted herewith.

Respectfully yours,

William Phillips.

Enclosure

1. Translation of news summary.

DW-wrm

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Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 1740 of Feb. 3, 1940
From American Embassy, ROME.

(TRANSLATION)

Paris, February 1, 1940.

DIPLOMATIC SITUATION

Economic Problems and the Belgrade Conference

It is certain that economic questions, and more particularly those which concern the relations between the Balkan States and the belligerents, will play a primordial part in the conference which is now opening at Belgrade. "It is a question of reinforcing the economic solidarity of the Balkan countries" PRAVDA of Belgrade writes correctly. "Economic activity is an important element in the independence of every country." It is for this reason that the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries which are members of the Balkan Entente, will examine the possibilities of a closer economic collaboration within this organism, a collaboration which could, eventually, also be extended to Bulgaria. "It is necessary, in view of the present situation, that the Balkan countries form a solid bloc which will permit them to negotiate with other countries under much more favorable conditions."

In this respect, the speech, rich in substance, which Mr. Chamberlain has just made, will give valuable indications to the negotiators of the Balkan Entente. The British Prime Minister emphasized the fact that international commerce, in order that it may develop, must pass through

numerous

numerous and varied phases, and that it is necessary to try to put an end to the defective policy of economic nationalism and of autarchy which contaminated the development of the last peace treaty. "One of our principal aims", Mr. Chamberlain declared, "will be the restoration of international commerce which appears to us to be the best means for reestablishing prosperity and the consuming power of the nations. It is our intention to adopt this policy when the time comes to again turn from war to peace." The Prime Minister recalled, opportunely, that it is a little more than a year ago since Great Britain had concluded with the United States an agreement which made possible the improvement of international commerce in that it was the very negation of the too widespread system of "bilateralism", of exclusive advantages, of effective discrimination which impedes the wheels of commerce and raises difficulties between the interested countries. This agreement was based on the principle of the most favored nation: "The best method", Mr. Chamberlain declared, "of encouraging international commerce in normal times. That is why one must return to this idea (he added) when the war will be victoriously terminated."

This return to liberalism, which corresponds to the traditions of Great Britain and France, is also the doctrine of the United States. It is filled with altruist sentiments harmoniously joined in the clearest sense, to private and public interests. We find it again in the words pronounced by Mr. Berle, Assistant Secretary of State of

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the United States, who in addressing the students of a large university developed the theme that the United States would be called upon to cooperate in the reconstruction of Europe after the war. Referring to the enormous stocks of gold held by the Federal Reserve, he declared that it seemed impossible to-day to make use of them, even in part, to help the other continent to resume its normal life and trade. "But" he added with much perspicacity, "when the moment comes to face this situation, we will perhaps discover that this idea will look more like an immediate necessity than a fairy tale."

Mr. Berle emphasized the necessity which will confront the United States, in its own interest, to adapt itself to the economic system which will exist after the war.

In Japan, Mr. Arita, Minister for Foreign Affairs, has just made a speech in a moderate tone to the Diet wherein he affirms that the policy of his Government in no way tends to eliminate the legitimate rights and interests of the United States and of other powers in China, but, on the contrary, to solicit their active collaboration in the establishment of a new order. Finally, Mr. Cordell Hull has just approved the declarations of Mr. Chamberlain, expressing his hope that there will be a return to normal international commerce. The American Secretary of State has recalled that the object of his normal program was to prevent the large nations from adopting autarchic and totalitarian systems. He believes that this policy is supported more and more widely in other countries and he has not concealed his hope of seeing it universally adopted

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in the near future. This policy which is, we repeat, the policy of the Allies and which the Frano-British economic union is already utilizing to its extreme limit, is based on the human solidarity which should unite all people if certain of them were not led by bad shepherds.

At the moment of the opening of the Belgrade conference it is hoped that the States which are taking a part therein and for which the Entente affords the precious elements of equilibrium and calm, will fully understand the capital difference between the economic conceptions of the Allies and those of Germany. After all, the difference is of the same character as that which appears in their general policy: on one side, liberty, respect of contracts, the development of prosperity; on the other, constraint, oppression, barter, restrictions. In peacetime, autarchy is a method by which a nation hungry for conquests can prepare to wage war without depending on outside help. In wartime, automatically, if one can say so, the autarchic nation becomes imperialistic. Blockaded, its tendency is to use military force to extract from its neighbors the economic "vital space" which it lacks. The Scandinavian countries, Belgium, Holland know how they stand in this respect. The Balkan States undoubtedly have no more illusions. This group has already had many years of experience which allows them to see clear. For its policy of blocked marks Germany now substitutes a conception of one-way neutrality which she hopes to impose upon Neutrals by force and which, if the Balkan States allowed themselves to be won over, would promptly result, through the pro-

gressive

gressive absorption of all their products, in the same economic dictatorship which the Nazi régime has saddled on the German nation.

There is no doubt but that they are obliged to take precautions on account of their geographic position, but they will also understand that it is not to their best interests to allow themselves to be protected by hitlerian autarchy. Economic "vital space" is followed by political "vital space", with its ethnical readjustments and atrocious methods which we are witnessing at the present moment.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS FEB 27 1940 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

HSM
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br.)

FROM Ankara

Dated February 26, 1940

Rec'd 11:50 a. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

19, February 26, 1 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

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Although I have not yet been able to confirm it in full the inquiries prompted by Athens' telegram No. 29, February 15, 4 p. m., have at any rate disclosed that the conception of Balkan solidarity developed at the recent Belgrade meeting of the Entente was considerably more concrete than has been allowed to become known here. The inference from such information as I have been able to gather is that the fear of antagonizing one or another of the great powers led the conferees to discuss the matter in extreme secrecy orally and even in allusive rather than direct terms but with a resulting understanding that the several member states would give armed support to any of their number attacked from the outside.

Repeated to Athens, Belgrade, Bucharest.

MACMURRAY

KLP

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FILED FEB 29 1940

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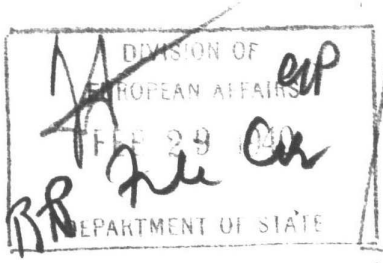
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

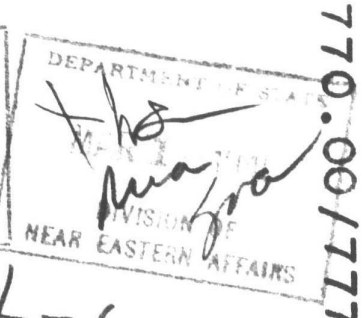
HSM
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br.)

FROM Belgrade

Dated February 28, 1940

Rec'd 1:54 p. m.





770.00/777

Secretary of State,

Washington.

61, February 28, 11 p. m.

576

Confidential. With reference to Ankara's telegram No. 19, February 26, 1 p. m., I have not been able to confirm here the report that some understanding was reached at the recent Belgrade meeting regarding joint military action to be taken in the event that any member of the Balkan Entente were (*). The fact that mutual military assistance was not mentioned in the proces-verbal as transmitted in my 56, February 21, should not be regarded however as conclusively proving that no agreement on this subject was reached. It will be recalled that although the proces-verbal of the Balkan Entente meeting makes no mention of the decision to invite Bulgaria to participate in the forthcoming economic council of the Balkan Entente the Minister for Foreign Affairs advised me on February 12 (see my telegram No. 47) that such a decision was made. If such an important

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matter

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MAR 2 1940

GML

matter were omitted from the proces-verbal it would seem to be equally possible to omit a matter such as mutual assistance.

Military Attache reports a high Yugoslav military official as stating that Yugoslavia's plans for mobilization will depend on actions of her neighbors and that Yugoslavia has no intention of becoming a second Poland. Fortier is of the opinion that his informant was referring to mobilization to meet attack against Yugoslavia and not to joint action with other Balkan Entente members. French Military Attache informs Fortier that both Rumania and Hungary contemplate mobilizations soon and that this action would serve as a signal for a Yugoslav partial mobilization.

In the light of our present information I feel that in spite of the above Yugoslavia would not come to the aid of Rumania in the event of an attack on Rumania by Germany or Russia. Fortier concurs. There may have been a vague understanding as implied in the second sentence of paragraph four of the proces-verbal of extending the defensive character of the Balkan pact against powers outside the Balkans but I doubt whether such an understanding would be effective unless implemented by a signed instrument which I am assured does not exist.

Repeated to Embassy at Ankara, Athens.

LANE

(*) apparent omission
CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JT

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM BUCHAREST

Dated February 28, 1940

Rec'd 4:47 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 1 — 1940
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

50, February 28, midnight.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

770.00

From inquiries here I have little to add to comments in the second paragraph of Minister Lane's telegram No. 57 of February 21, 6 p.m., regarding Minister MacVeagh's telegram 770.00/767 No. 29, February 15, 4 p.m. I gather that various hypothetical aggressions were discussed confidentially by the ministers but that no binding (*) were entered into. One major reason for caution was German and Russian declared opposition to extention of entente into anything which might resemble a defensive alliance. About two months before the Belgrade meeting Foreign Minister Gafencu sounded out Moscow through the Rumanian Minister there on this subject (see penultimate paragraph of my telegram No. 440, December 21, 8 p.m.). He did this, it appears in consonance with his strictly adhered to policy of frankness with a view to continuance of substantially cordial relations with all. Moscow's reply was one of firm disapproval. I understand that it was even intimated

that

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that the meeting had better be deferred. In view of the abbve it was the obvious part of wisdom to do nothing provocative.

Although I firmly believe that no binding (*) were entered into other than those of a general nature in the proce-verbaux of the Belgrade conference nevertheless the exchange of views between the ministers, as Minister MacVeagh has reported, has made the Balkan Entente a living union with real potentialities of mutual assistance depending upon how the eventual menaces develop. Should Russia alone be the aggressor I think that assistance in one form or another would be promptly forthcoming. However should the invasion be joint German and Russian that would be another matter. In that case also something would depend upon Hungary's role. Nor is it quite clear what would be the position of the other states should Rumania become an unwilling theater of war due to an Allied thrust.

GUNTHER

(*) Apparent omissions

EMB

EO
~~PA/D~~
~~DCA~~
~~A/E~~

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 869 Belgrade, February 8, 1940.

Subject: Balkan Entente Meeting: Conversation with Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs.

6 RECEIVED DEPARTMENT OF STATE 1940 MAR 1 PM 2 47

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE MAR 26 1940 DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS MAR 2 1940 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE MAR 21 1940 ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS MR. DUNN MAR 26 1940 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

770.00/779

GRR

FILED MAR 27 1940

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

With reference to my telegram No. 39, of February 7, 4 p.m., briefly summarizing a conversation with the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Milivoj Smiljanić, and to my despatch No. 867, of February 7, 1940, reporting conversations with the Greek Minister and the Secretary of the Turkish Embassy in connection with the recent meeting of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente, I have the honor now to give to the Department, in greater detail, Dr.Smiljanić's views. Although Dr. Smiljanić emphasized several times during the conversation that he was expressing only his personal views, I am of the opinion that they represent the official attitude of the Yugoslav Foreign Office.

Dr. Smiljanić

Dr. Smiljanić opened the conversation by referring to the large number of American journalists who had come to Belgrade for the Entente Meeting. He likewise referred to a telegram having been received from Mr. Fotić, the Yugoslav Minister in Washington, commenting on the great interest shown by the American press and on the excellent accounts which had been sent by the correspondents in Belgrade. I said that unfortunately some rumors had been spread that the American correspondents were writing sensational reports regarding the conference, for instance, that Rumania was leaving the Belkan Entente to ally herself with Germany, but on investigation we found these reports to be baseless. I had endeavored, I said, to impress upon American correspondents that the Entente Meeting was the normal annual gathering of the Foreign Ministers and should not be given any sensational significance. I added that I was very grateful to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to Dr. Smiljanić for having told me in advance regarding the scope of the meeting. I had consequently been able to inform my Government accurately.

Dr. Smiljanić confirmed what he told me before, namely, that the meeting had no purpose other than to exchange points of view and if possible to pave the way to better relations with the neighbors of the Balkan Entente. He said that the meeting undoubtedly did create a better feeling in Southeastern Europe.

I inquired regarding a report from London which had appeared in the local press on February 7, to the effect that an economic meeting of the Balkan Entente would take place shortly and that Bulgaria would take part. Dr. Smiljanić said that as a matter of course, the Permanent Economic Council of the Balkan Entente, which never meets simultaneously with the Permanent (political) Council, meets in April or May of each year to discuss economic matters, such as trade balances, exchange questions, as well as railway, postal and telegraphic

communications

communications in the Balkans. Bulgaria has, of course, distinct interest in these matters and it is possible that Bulgaria may be invited to participate. In reply to my direct question, he said he did not know as yet whether Bulgaria would attend.

I said that I understood that the Balkan Entente Ministers had taken no decision as to the attitude of the Entente in the event that one of the member States were attacked. I mentioned the apparent interest of the Hungarian Government in ascertaining whether the Balkan Entente would come to the aid of Rumania in the event of the invasion of Rumania by the Soviet Union. Dr. Smijanić said that the Ministers had taken no decision regarding any hypothetical case. He confirmed the information which I had received from the Greek Minister that it would be a simple matter to convoke the four Foreign Ministers in the event of serious trouble.

I referred to the meeting between the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Saraçoglu, and the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Mr. Kiosseivanov, at Sofia and observed that Mr. Saraçoglu had apparently been very well satisfied with the assurances he had received from Mr. Kiosseivanov. Dr. Smiljanić said he assumed I was referring to the meeting between the two statesmen on Mr. Saraçoglu's trip to Belgrade and not to their meeting on his way home. Dr. Smiljanić confirmed our information that Mr. Saraçoglu had received definite assurances from the Bulgarian Prime Minister that Bulgaria would postpone her territorial revindications until after the war. He made it clear, however, that Bulgaria is not satisfied with conditions now existing regarding her territorial status, but not being able to obtain her desires at the present time and not wishing to bring about a conflagration in the Balkans, she has decided to be patient and to put off the question until later. He indicated that Bulgaria seemed to appreciate the stand of the Balkan Entente. The fact that Bulgaria might take part in the

forthcoming

forthcoming meeting of the Economic Council of the Entente is a good sign.

I observed that Hungary seemed to be the one country which is dissatisfied with the results of the conference. I mentioned that Hungary seemed to feel that Germany had let her down in having virtually taken over Slovakia, despite her apparent former sympathy with Hungarian territorial claims towards Slovakia, and that Italy had let her down in the Venice conversations between Count Ciano and Count Csaky. The fact that Italy was now sympathetic to the Balkan Entente seemed to be an added blow to Hungarian prestige and ambitions. I also indicated that we had the impression that certain Hungarian officials had shown a very bitter attitude towards Rumania and had hinted that when the appropriate moment arrived they would obtain the territory they desired, by force if necessary.

Dr. Smiljanić said that Hungary is chiefly to blame for the present uncertainty which has arisen regarding her territorial aspirations. When the matter of the rectification of the Hungarian-Rumanian frontier had arisen, Hungary would give no definite indication as to what would satisfy her. For instance, it has been suggested that the frontier be rectified along the Satu-Mare-Arad line; such a rectification might easily be possible. If, however, Hungary expects to have all of Transylvania returned to her, or to have her frontier in the Carpathians, then it is useless to discuss the matter. Dr. Smiljanić indicated that despite the good relations existing between Hungary and Yugoslavia, the Yugoslavs are impatient with what they consider Hungary's unreasonable attitude. He attributes the Hungarian unreasonableness to the lively temperament of the Hungarian people who quickly become excited, but who are not apt to look at questions in a practical manner.

I

I said to Dr. Smiljanić that I would be very glad to have his comments on Italian-Turkish relations. I went on to say that we had many conflicting reports as to what is really taking place. On one side we had heard that Italy desires a better understanding with Turkey and on the other hand we hear that the Turks are distrustful regarding Italy, because of the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese and of Albania.

Dr. Smiljanić said that he thought the relations had improved between the two countries as a result of their mutual desire to protect themselves against the Soviets, as well as to check any further Soviet advance in the Balkans. For this reason, the relations have become entirely correct, as evidenced by the recent conclusion of an economic agreement between the two countries. He added that Italy's increased trade with Turkey is a good omen. He blamed the failure of having a more cordial understanding to Italy's desire to be the only Mediterranean power of importance. He said that Italy is always jealous of the preponderance of any other Mediterranean power. He likewise said that Italy must proceed very cautiously at the present moment as she cannot afford to risk the ill will of Germany which might threaten the Italian border.

Respectfully yours,

Arthur Bliss Lane

Arthur Bliss Lane.

File No. 710
ABL/iv

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

EC
~~PAD~~
D/A
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No. 870 Belgrade, February 7, 1940.

Subject: Meeting of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940.

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
1940 MAR 1 PM 2 47
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 1 1940
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAR 2 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 1940
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE ADVISER ON INTERNATIONAL ... AFFAIRS
MAR 13 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF TRADE AGREEMENTS
MAR 15 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

770.00/780

MAR 18 1940

GRR

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

With reference to my telegrams No. 24 of January 23, 12 noon, No. 31 of February 1, 7 p.m., and No. 33 of February 3, 1 p.m., relating to the meeting in this city on February 2, 3, and 4 of the Foreign Ministers of Yugoslavia, Rumania, Turkey and Greece, I have the honor to submit herewith a report on this conference of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente.

This report will not attempt to analyze the results and significance of this meeting, but is rather intended

to

to provide the Department with a detailed record concerning the program carried out during the three-day conference, the names and titles of the Rumanian, Turkish and Greek delegations, the text of the communiqué issued at the close of the conference on the evening of February 4, translations of the texts of the more important speeches delivered during the meeting, translations of statements given to the press by the chief delegates of the four member countries, editorial comment from the Yugoslav press, and information relating to the activities of foreign journalists who came to Belgrade to cover the conference. With regard to the results obtained at the meeting and the significant discussions which took place between the four Foreign Ministers, the Department is referred to my telegrams No. 37 of February 6, 7 p.m., and No. 39 of February 7, 4 p.m., and to my despatches No. 867 of February 7 and No. 869 of February 8. I shall endeavor to obtain additional information from my diplomatic colleagues in this city, and as such information is obtained I shall report to the Department either by telegraph or by despatch.

In order that the Department may be provided with a coherent record of this meeting, this despatch will be divided into three sections, i.e., one section on the program followed during the meeting; one section providing translations of declarations to the press as well as the more significant speeches delivered; and a final section having to do with the press.

I.

I. PROGRAM.

Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, General Metaxas, and Turkish Foreign Minister Saracoglu arrived in Belgrade by train on the evening of February 1. The Greek and Turkish representatives were met by Yugoslav Prime Minister Cvetković and Minister for Foreign Affairs Cincar-Marković, who were accompanied by high Yugoslav civil and military officials. General Metaxas, as head of his Government, was accompanied to his hotel by Mr. Cvetković, while Foreign Minister Cincar-Marković conducted Mr. Saracoglu to his hotel. The Rumanian delegation, headed by Foreign Minister Gafenco, arrived by special train from Bucharest early the next morning and were met at the station by the Yugoslav Foreign Minister.

1/. There is attached hereto a list containing the names of the official delegations of Greece, Turkey and Rumania.

The three Foreign Ministers during the morning of February 2 met briefly with Foreign Minister Cincar-Marković and then called at the Marshalate of the Royal Court in order to write their names in the visiting books. They then paid official calls upon Prime Minister Cvetković and Vice Prime Minister Maček. The three chief delegates, accompanied by the principal members of their respective delegations, then attended a luncheon party in their honor given by Prince Regent Paul at the White Palace. This luncheon was also attended by the Turkish and Rumanian Ambassadors and the Greek Minister, as well as by various prominent persons in Yugoslav civil and military life. On the same day a luncheon was given by the Chief of the Yugoslav Central Press Bureau for prominent Greek, Rumanian and

Turkish

Turkish editors, publishers, and journalists who accompanied their respective delegations to Belgrade. The Chief of the Press Bureau made a speech stressing Balkan solidarity and wishing every success to the conference. The Director General of the Athens Agency replied for the Greeks, Mr. Vladimir Jonesco for the Rumanian journalists, and Mr. Sadak, Director of the "Aksam", replied in the name of Turkish journalism.

The four Foreign Ministers held an executive meeting on that afternoon, February 2. They met at the Foreign Office, and no secretaries or interpreters were present at the first or any of the other meetings, of which there were five in all. The meetings, which lasted between one and two hours, were conducted in the French language. The Greek Premier and Foreign Minister and the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs were received in audience by Prince Paul later that same afternoon.

That evening a dinner for the delegations was given by Rumanian Ambassador Viktor Cadere. The dinner was followed by a large reception.

The four Foreign Ministers met again during the next morning, February 3, and their meeting was followed by a formal luncheon at the Turkish Embassy. The four representatives met again in the afternoon, and that night a large formal dinner party was given by Minister for Foreign Affairs Cincar-Marković.

General Metaxas and Foreign Ministers Gafenco, Saracoglu, and Cincar-Marković had their next private meeting during the morning of February 4, which was followed by a luncheon party at the Greek Legation. At six o'clock,

representatives

representatives of the press were invited to appear at a special press conference at the Foreign Office. At this conference there were present the four delegates, and the official communiqué was read by President of the Council of the Balkan Entente Gafenco, who then made a short address, which was followed by short statements made by the Greek, Turkish and Yugoslav Foreign Ministers.

Following the press conference, Foreign Minister Cincar-Marković gave what was described in the press as an "intimate dinner" for the three delegations, immediately before their departure by train that same night.

Prime Minister Cvetković invited Foreign Ministers Metaxas and Saracoglu to visit him on February 5 at his native city of Niš, which is the railway junction for trains proceeding to Athens and Istanbul from Belgrade. The Yugoslav Prime Minister accompanied the Greek and Turkish Foreign Ministers when they left Belgrade by train late on the evening of February 4. That same evening Foreign Minister Gafenco left Belgrade by train for Bucharest.

II. OFFICIAL DECLARATIONS, SPEECHES, AND INTERVIEWS TO THE PRESS.

Preceding, during and subsequent to the three-day meeting there were innumerable speeches, declarations and interviews given to the press. This report will not attempt to cover all of these matters but will provide the texts, in translation, of the more important and significant addresses and public declarations.

The local press on February 2 published a declaration made by Foreign Minister Cincar-Marković to the Stefani
2/. Agency. A translation of his statement is attached hereto. The Department will note that Dr. Cincar-Marković made a friendly

friendly reference to Italy and to Italian foreign policy in Southeastern Europe as a factor making for peace.

3/. There is enclosed herewith a translation of the address delivered by Foreign Minister Cincar-Marković after the dinner which he gave to the three visiting delegations

4/. on the evening of February 3, together with a translation of the reply which was delivered by Foreign Minister Gafenco.

5/. There is attached hereto, in translation, the text of the official communiqué which was released to the press at the close of the conference on the evening of February 4.

6/. There is also enclosed the text, in translation, of the declaration which Mr. Gafenco made to the representatives of the press immediately after he concluded reading the text of the communiqué. The Department will note that the Rumanian Foreign Minister commences his declaration by stating that he has nothing to add to the communiqué itself but said that his ideas relating to the purposes and methods of the Balkan Entente would be found in a speech made on the previous evening. This reference has been regarded in Belgrade as of some significance inasmuch as his address was much more explicit and went much farther afield than does the bare text of the communiqué.

7/. There are also attached translations of the declarations

8/. made at the press conference by Foreign Ministers Metaxas,

9/. Saracoglu and Cincar-Marković.

III. YUGOSLAV PRESS REACTION AND THE ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS.

For several days preceding the conference, the Yugoslav press was full of editorial comment relating to the coming meeting.

meeting. This comment was all uniformly optimistic and was generally along the same lines, i.e., stressing Balkan solidarity and the firm desire to keep the peace in South-eastern Europe, etc. As typical of this comment, there is
10/. enclosed herewith a translation of the leading editorial which appeared in the February 2nd issue of POLITIKA, the most influential and widely read newspaper in Yugoslavia. There
11/. is also attached the leading editorial which appeared in VREME on February 4. It is understood that this editorial was officially inspired.

Some days before the conference commenced, large numbers of German, British, French, Italian, Hungarian, American and Balkan journalists started arriving in Belgrade to cover the annual session of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente, which, it was thought, would produce important news. The Chief of the Press Bureau informed an officer of this Legation that there were about one hundred fifty foreign journalists in Belgrade during the three days' meeting. Among the American journalists were Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick of the NEW YORK TIMES, and Miss Sonia Tomara, Central European and Balkan correspondent of the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, as well as representatives of the Associated Press, United Press, and the International News Service. Inasmuch as the conference produced nothing in the way of bona fide sensational news, the foreign journalists were generally hard put to find anything of news value to report to their respective newspapers. The inevitable result was that many of the reporters resorted to their imaginations and a great deal of material supposedly on the conference was sent out which had none or very little basis in fact. The American

correspondents

correspondents were reported to be among the principal offenders in this matter.

The Department will note that in his declaration at the press conference on February4 President of the Permanent Council Gafenco took particular occasion to deny "all of the sansational rumors which, it seems, have been spread in connection with our conference." It is understood that Mr. Gafenco had particularly in mind a piece transmitted by the representative of the United Press, who indicated that Rumania was on the point of withdrawing from the Balkan Entente and arranging some sort of rapprochement with Germany. Foreign Minister Gafenco is reliably reported to have expressed his irritation to certain Italian journalists with regard to this and other sensational stories which were sent from Belgrade, some of them by American correspondents. It is thought, however, that part of the blame should be attached to the highly secret manner in which the meetings were conducted, as well as to the incompetent manner in which representatives of the foreign press were handled. Another reason why some of the press accounts of the conference were inaccurate and sensational was undoubtedly due to the fact that most of the foreign correspondents who came to Belgrade to cover the meeting have had in general very little indeed to do during the past four months and were, as a consequence, rather desperate for any sort of story to transmit to their respective newspapers. The American correspondents who called at the Legation admitted that Europe is overstocked with American correspondents, all

of

of whom are waiting for something to happen. They all complained that during the conference here it was virtually impossible for them to interview any of the delegates or to obtain any facts upon which to base a newspaper story and admitted that they had been forced to rely on their imaginations to a very great extent.

Respectfully yours,

Arthur Bliss Lane

Arthur Bliss Lane

Enclosures:

1. List of delegates.
2. Translation of Yugoslav Foreign Minister's statement to the Stefani Agency.
3. Translation of Yugoslav Foreign Minister's address of February 3.
4. Translation of reply to above address, made by Rumanian Foreign Minister.
5. Translation of official communiqué issued February 4.
6-9. Translations of declarations of the four Foreign Ministers to the press.
10. Translation of editorial of POLITIKA of February 2.
11. Translation of editorial of VREME of February 4.

File No. 710

RPJ/HLN

Copies to Ankara, Athens, Bucharest, and Rome.

Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

AVALA, February 2, 1940.

Delegations to Balkan Entente Conference.

Greek Delegation

Mr. John Metaxas, President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.
Mr. Leon Melas, Minister Plenipotentiary and Director of Political Affairs.
Mr. Basil Papadakis, Minister Plenipotentiary, Director of Research Section.
Mr. Leonidas Gaphos, Director of the Balkan Section.
Mr. Pindar Androulis, Director of Cabinet of the President of the Council.
Mr. Zacharias Nobelis, Lieutenant Colonel, Aide-de-camp of the President of the Council.
Mr. Eugene Phokas, Professor of the University of Athens.

Turkish Delegation

Mr. Şükrü Saracoglu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey.
Mr. Ferdin Cemal Erkin, Director of the Political Department.
Mr. Resat Erhan, Chief of the Balkan Section.

Rumanian Delegation

Mr. Gregory Gafenco, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rumania.
Mr. Alexander Cretzianu, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Mr. Vladimir Jonesco, Chief of Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Mr. Dimitri Popesco, Director of Cabinet.
Mr. Lidiu Cincin Popp, Chef de Cabinet.

Enclosure No. 2 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

AVALA, February 2, 1940.
12 noon issue.

Declaration Made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, Mr. Cincar-Marković, to the Stefani Agency.

"The Council of the Balkan Entente," said Mr. Cincar-Marković, "which meets on February 2 in Belgrade, will continue its work in order to maintain peace and good relations with neighbors and to avoid any antagonisms. With such a task, the Balkan Entente manifests its firm decision to maintain stability and strict political neutrality in the present conflict. I am glad to say that this action, which is based on a full comprehension of our own interests and of general interests, is facilitated by the attitude of other factors abroad. Among those the attitude of Italy occupies a particularly predominant position, as it works for the consolidation of peace in Southeastern Europe, a policy in which the states of this part of Europe see an important contribution to the policy of peace and neutrality."

Enclosure No. 3 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

AVALA, February 3, 1940.

Speech of Mr. Cincar-Marković, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

At the banquet given this evening at the Officers' Club by Mr. and Mrs. Cincar-Marković, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia made the following speech:

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with great satisfaction that I have the honor of greeting in the capital of Yugoslavia the distinguished representatives of the friendly countries members of the Balkan Entente, whose Permanent Council is assembled for an annual ordinary meeting under the charimanship of my colleague and friend Mr. Gafenco. This conference falls exactly on the sixth anniversary of the day on which was signed, here in Belgrade, the Balkan Entente Pact, and this happy coincidence furnishes us with the occasion to consider the continuity of its beneficent activity in the past and to confirm our firm desire to remain faithful to this valuable instrument of peace and cooperation in the Balkans.

However, the historic value for our countries of this meeting of the Council is increased this year by the grave, almost tragic, conditions under which all European peoples are living today. Three great world powers, three of the greatest peoples in Europe, which up to this time were at the head of all the political and intellectual life of our continent, are engaged in a serious armed conflict the evolution of which it is impossible to foresee. And precisely because of these circumstances, the states of the Balkan Entente find it their duty to be doubly cautious and to show the greatest wisdom, in order to avoid for their nations the renewal of the calamities of war, from which they have suffered so greatly in the past and from which they could expect nothing in the present.

From the beginning of the present conflict the Balkan Entente Governments have openly expressed their desire to remain neutral under one sole condition; that is, that their integrity and their independence should not be brought into the situation through the development of events. We are happy today to be able to affirm that our peaceful efforts have, until now, had good results. We consider the future with optimism. The Balkans are not threatened on any side. The loyal and correct attitude of the Balkan nations has been justly appreciated and respected by all.

I should add with particular satisfaction that the attitude of the two countries of the Balkan and Danubian region

which

which are outside of the Pact, Bulgaria and Hungary, has also been in agreement with the peaceful policy of the states of the Balkan Entente. This justifies the sincere hope that a feeling of real solidarity will finally create lasting conditions for a happy future for all the peoples living in the Balkans and the Danubian basin.

Likewise, Italy deserves all our gratitude for her valuable contribution towards the maintenance of peace in Southeastern Europe by the wise and "non-belligerent" attitude which she has taken from the beginning of the conflict.

This meeting of the Permanent Council has as its task the renewal of the firm decision of the Balkan Entente countries to continue in mutual cooperation and by close contact the policy of peace and conciliation practiced up to today. In this respect it would be desirable that the economic cooperation between the Balkan countries should manifest itself, also, in a more efficacious manner not only in order that we may be able to resist more easily the trials of the present time but also so that in the future such close cooperation may serve to bring about a constantly growing prosperity among our peoples.

The policy followed by the Balkan Entente countries has already overcome the difficulties of a critical period in the present conflict. It is only a policy such as this which will permit us in the future to keep the Balkans out of all danger of war. Thus the Balkan peoples in contributing to localization of the war are at the same time working for the return of peace in Europe as soon as possible, and are facilitating all the high initiatives emanating from the highest authorities of the world to preserve humanity from an irreparable catastrophe.

It is with such sentiments and with such hopes that I raise my glass to the health of His Majesty Carol II of Rumania, His Majesty King George II of Greece, and His Excellency Mr. Ismet Inonu, President of the Turkish Republic, and I drink to the prosperity of the noble Rumanian, Greek and Turkish nations, and to your personal happiness, Excellencies and dear friends, as well as to that of Madame Saracoglu.

Enclosure No. 4 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

AVALA, February 3, 1940.

Address of Mr. Gafenco, Rumanian Foreign Minister.

Mr. Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We thank you heartily, our distinguished colleagues and myself, for your very kind words and your fraternal greeting.

Your government, your capital, your people have shown us, since we are among you, so much kindness and such spontaneous, sincere and cordial sympathy that we do not know how to express to you our great and affectionate gratitude.

Our Council has met in this ordinary session in extraordinary times, under the sign which has always presided over our debates and has always determined our decisions,--that of a perfect and trusting friendship.

This friendship, always on the alert and always active, and which the trials through which we are going can only develop and enlarge, creates among us a community of feeling which reinforces our written obligations and exceeds them as fast as, in the course of the very rapid succession of events, our mutual interests stand out and become better outlined.

Our Entente thus takes on a higher significance: we represent a region with its interests, its aspirations and the important task which devolves upon it.

Hence the mutual interest which we take in defending our supreme rights: our right to liberty, unity, and to national territory.

Hence also our resolutely peaceful attitude, our aversion for all aggression, and our desire to avoid for this region, so often devastated, the renewal of past sanguinary experiences.

This desire for peace we have clearly affirmed in all our region, from the Black Sea to the Adriatic, from the summits of the Carpathians to the southernmost promontories of Greece, and we have the right to hope that a neutrality which prejudices no one and which serves the general interest will be respected as loyally as we ourselves respect it.

Our attachment to peace is not confined, however, to a selfish disinterestedness of all that goes on around us. We share the anxiety of many European countries during this struggle which opposes great nations to which we are linked by so many deep sentiments and such great interests, and we feel with grief to what extent the destruction of the values that are now in danger can impoverish our common patrimony: European civilization.

May

May efforts such as those which we are making in our region to develop a close cooperation between neighbors insure to each nation, great or small, conditions of a free national life; may such efforts spread, be amplified, and contribute to prepare the coming at an earlier date of a new Europe, appeased, organized and united.

Mr. Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The regional idea which guides us determines our relations between us, and our relations with our immediate neighbors.

At the beginning of our Entente there were two facts, the importance and meaning of which we should not forget.

One nation, of ancient glorious conquerors, decides by means of a political and moral revolution to make an effort for new grandeur by consecrating its efforts to the development of the national idea. Another succeeds the very day after a grievous experience, by means of a highly wise political action, to change a serious enmity into a perfect and beneficent alliance.

The very vivid feeling in regard to all that is national--national virtue, national unity, national territory--and also a spirit of conciliation ready to throw bridges across past resentments and to pick out among special interests the general interest which dominates,--such is the feeling which has brought nearer, and which has united in the midst of our Entente, conciliated nations equal among themselves, and free.

It has been reproached that this Entente is directed against certain neighboring states. It is so little directed against them that, in view of its regional character, its significance and its aims, it contains them in advance. Therefore we are happy every time that our neighbors show their comprehension of this appurtenance.

You have justly evoked, Mr. Minister, our common desire to establish confident relations with Bulgaria. I wish to add that we have all appreciated certain words of the Chief of the Bulgarian Government emphasizing his wish to respect the obligations and the interests of the Balkan community. Such words draw us nearer to the day of peace, and make firmer our conviction that, with the enlarged framework of an entente such as ours, all relations between neighbors may be settled in a friendly fashion.

You have also alluded, Mr. Minister, to our relations with Hungary. The Danubian peace is akin to the Balkan peace, and you judge, and rightly, that the policy of conciliation and rapprochement which has already grouped four countries in the Balkans is bound to have other happy results. Therefore, you have never concealed the interest which you take in the development of confident relations

with Hungary. You know that we have always been, on this subject, entirely in accord and closely united.

Conscious of the value of words and of the gravity of the times, I shall confine mysself here to the expression of my deep conviction that, in regard to the Danubian problems, as well as the Balkan problems, it is possible to find within the framework of a regional entente appropriate formulas to conciliate among themselves races closely intermingled and to bring amicably together neighboring states.

This seems to me all the more possible that the common history of these peoples, which has sown under their footsteps numerous resentments, has also created among them innumerable ties as to interests, parentage and sympathy, and assigns to them, more and more clearly, a common task in solidarity.

Is it necessary to add that our Entente, which only pursues its own aims and does not submit to any foreign influence, has proved amply that it is not directed against anybody and that it is sensitive to any proof of comprehension which is shown it.

This is why we highly appreciate the political and moral value of the friendly attitude of Italy, which meets our aspirations for peace, order, and security, thus emphasizing the importance of the interests that we have in common.

Mr. Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I do not wish to wind up these few words without reminding you that our four countries, resolved to pursue in common their peaceful efforts, keep faithfully in memory their military virtues.

Our past of suffering, struggles, brave actions, and glorious exploits, is there to each us that in order to reach a high ideal, and likewise to defend a patrimony or maintain a sacred heritage, it is necessary to be brave and strong.

The care which each of us brings to the preparation and development of its means of defense serves the common interest of our Entente; likewise, the increased prestige of our Entente reinforces the peace and security of each of us.

I owe it to myself to evoke these essential truths in a country like yours, where a wise policy of conciliation and appeasement, internally as well as externally, is supported by the heroic traditions of a firm, courageous and strong people.

I raise my glass and drink to the health of His Majesty, King Peter II of Yugoslavia, to the health of His Royal Highness Prince Paul of Yugoslavia and to the Members of the High Regency, to the friendly and allied nation of Yugoslavia, as well as to your health and personal happiness, Mr. Minister, and to that of Mrs. Cincar-Marković, who has given us such a charming welcome.

Enclosure No. 5 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

AVALA, February 4, 1940,
7 p.m. issue.

COMMUNIQUÉ
Published after Close of the Conference of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente Held in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940.

At six o'clock on the evening of February 4, 1940, Mr. Gregory Gafenco, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rumania and Acting President of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente, read, in the presence of Mr. John Metaxas, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Mr. Saracoglu, Foreign Minister of Turkey, and Dr. Aleksandar Cincar-Marković, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, the following communiqué:

"The Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente met in Belgrade on February 2, 3 and 4, 1940, Greece being represented by Mr. John Metaxas, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs; Rumania by Mr. Gregory Gafenco, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Turkey by Mr. Şükrü Saracoglu, Minister for Foreign Affairs; and Yugoslavia by Mr. Aleksandar Cincar-Marković, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"The exchange of views, which took place between the members of the Permanent Council in an atmosphere of cordiality and confidence, has permitted them the opportunity to state unanimously:

"(1). The common interest of the four States that peace, order and security in the Southeast of Europe be maintained.

"(2). Their firm decision definitely to continue their policy of peace, strictly following their attitude toward the present conflict, in order to save this part of Europe from the calamities of war.

"(3).Their desire to remain united, within an Entente which pursues only its own ends and which is directed against no one, and to join in guarding the right of each to independence and national territorial integrity.

"(4). Their sincere desire to maintain and develop friendly relations with neighboring states in a spirit of conciliation and mutual understanding and of peaceful collaboration.

"(5). The necessity of tightening and improving economic and communication links existing between the Balkan States by specially organizing trade exchanges within the Entente.

"(6). The prolongation of the Balkan Pact for a new statutory period of seven years, as from February 9, 1941.

"(7). The decision of the four Ministers for Foreign Affairs to remain in intimate contact until the next session of the Permanent Council, which is to take place in Athens in February 1941."

Belgrade, February 4, 1940.

Enclosure No. 6 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

AVALA, 7:00 p.m. issue,
February 4, 1940.

Declaration Made to the Press by His Excellency Mr. Gregory Gafenco, Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

After the reading of the Communiqué, Mr. Gregory Gafenco, Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Acting President of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente, made the following declaration to the representatives of the press:--

"I have nothing to add to the Communiqué, which is above comments. You will find my ideas regarding the purposes and the methods of the Balkan Entente incorporated in my speech, which I hope is sufficiently explicit.

"As a former journalist--and you will always remain a bit of a journalist if you once were one--it is my professional duty and also a pleasure to deny all the sensational rumors which it is said have been spread in connection with our conference.

"The nervousness which sometimes appears when so many eminent colleagues such as you meet together has not passed the doors of our conference hall. We have worked in peace and in perfect understanding.

"I am convinced that, in the face of the results which you now know, you will interpret to the public opinion our sincere efforts to realize an accomplishment of peace and consolidation. And I wish to thank you in advance for your loyal collaboration.

"These few days spent together allow me and my colleagues to note our desire to remain united, to develop the entity of rights and interests which we represent, to serve the cause of peace with full loyalty, and to develop our friendly relations with neighboring countries.

"We are convinced that our Entente is becoming more and more an instrument of peace serving the interests of our countries and the cause of Europe, which have gone through so many vicissitudes and to which we remain loyally attached.

"In closing this session of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente, I wish to thank once more the Yugoslav Government, and particularly my friend Mr. Cincar-Marković, for the cordial and brotherly hospitality which was offered us."

Enclosure No. 7 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

AVALA, 7:00 p.m. issue,
February 4, 1940.

Declaration Made to the Press by His Excellency Mr. John Metaxas, Greek Premier and Minister for for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Metaxas, Head of the Greek Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs, then declared (following Mr. Gafenco's declaration):--

"Belgrade has welcomed us once more with its usual courtesy and hospitality. I should like, through you, to express my feelings of cordial gratitude to the population of the capital and to the entire noble Yugoslav nation. I am rejoicing at the idea of visiting Niš, where I have been invited by His Excellency the President of the Council of Ministers and where I shall be able to appreciate on a still larger scale the progress achieved through the untiring energy of my friend Mr. Cvetković.

"It would be useless to tell you once more that our activities have been pursued in a most cordial atmosphere. Our communiqué, as well as the speeches made yesterday evening, outlines for you in sufficient detail the fruitful results of our work. We are firmly convinced that, in consequence of our perfect solidarity and intimate collaboration, peace in this part of Europe will be fully protected."

Enclosure No. 8 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

AVALA, 7:00 p.m. issue,
February 4, 1940.

Declaration Made to the Press by His Excellency Mr. Şükrü Saracoglu, Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Following Mr. Metaxas, Mr. Saracoglu, Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, said:--

"In my capacity of Foreign Minister of the Turkish Republic, I take pleasure in realizing the successful close of the eighth regular session of the Council of the Balkan Entente. Thus the Entente has written another page of its existence. I could not mention these achievements before the eminent members of the press, in the beautiful capital of Yugoslavia, without respectfully thinking of the two great builders of our union, King Alexander and President Ataturk.

"At the close of the sixth year since the constitution of our Entente we experience a legitimate and fully justified pride in contemplating the results already achieved and those--far more brilliant--which we expect in the future. The Balkans, previously a classical and irremediable center of unrest,--a disparaging expression used in geographical comparisons to outline the compromised situation in a region otherwise peaceful,--give, under the present circumstances and to a world tortured by uncertainty and fear of tomorrow resulting from the war, an example of virtues such as wisdom, deliberation, solidarity, unity, and vigilance, which will keep our countries and our people far and safe from the great trials of the present conflict. This result is certainly due in part to the salutary lessons which our nations have learned during the sad experiences of the past. I also see in them the prominent and steadily working influence of a factor called the 'Balkan Entente'.

"I should not like to end these reflections without rendering homage to the sense of reality and to the spirit of understanding of my colleagues, the distinguished representatives of the allied countries, who by an intelligent and far-seeing attitude have set the fate of the Entente in an ascendant motion which nothing can stop."

Enclosure No. 9 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

AVALA, 7:00 p.m. issue,
February 4, 1940.

Declaration Made to the Press by His Excellency Mr. Cincar-Marković, Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Finally, Mr. Aleksandar Cincar-Marković, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, declared:--

"I think it is not necessary to emphasize, as you have been witnesses, how much the capital of Yugoslavia rejoiced that it was able to welcome and receive during these few days the eminent representatives of friendly nations, as well as the representatives of public opinion of foreign countries, and that it had the pleasure of serving as the meeting place of the present session of the Council of the Balkan Entente, which will have for results, as I firmly believe, beneficent consequences for the further development of events in the Balkans and in the Danube basin.

"At the moment of termination of this session of the Council I wish particularly to emphasize the spirit of complete and harmonious collaboration which prevailed in our work. Allow me at the same time to address my special thanks to my dear colleague and friend, Mr. Gregory Gafenco, who in his capacity of president has been able to guide our work with such competence and understanding.

"The atmosphre of cordiality which prevailed in our reunion and the views which were outlined during the course of the deliberations have been clearly expressed both in yesterday's speeches and in today's official communiqué. Everyone will be able to note the great importance of these activities for the maintenance of peace in our sector and for cooperation between all the Balkan states.

"I would not want to end this brief declaration without rendering homage to they way you have helped us and without appealing to your kind assistance in the peaceful efforts made by all the Balkan Governments."

Enclosure No. 10 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

AVALA, February 2, 1940.

The Yugoslav Press on the Meeting of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente.

Under the heading, "The Balkan Entente pursues in Belgrade its work of peace, neutrality, and economic collaboration," the POLITIKA of February 2, 1940, writes:--

"One may in advance affirm that this conference and the decisions it will adopt will be within the scope of the fundamental ideas of the Balkan Entente. Truly enough, although it was concluded only six years ago, this regional agreement, which was determined by actual geography, has a clearly established political aspect. Peace is the great idea on which this policy is founded.

"The powers of the Balkan Entente are not satisfied with defending this peace. They are conscious that maintaining it permanently means elimination of divergencies which may exist between the Balkan nations and their neighbors.

"In this regard the agreement concluded January 24, 1937, between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, known as the Pact of Eternal Friendship, is no doubt one of the most important acts. The signing of this pact was a new guarantee for maintenance of peace in the Balkans, and this was mentioned in the text of the official communiqué published at the close of the conference of the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Athens, which stated that the Bulgaro-Yugoslav Pact was a precious contribution toward the establishment of friendly collaboration of all the Balkan nations.

"The pact was followed by the termination of the seven years' customs war between Greece and Bulgaria and by the agreement of July 31, 1939, concluded at Salonika between Bulgaria and the states of the Balkan Entente, by which the contracting parties engaged themselves not to have recourse in their mutual affairs to the force of arms, and by which equality was granted to Bulgaria in questions of armament.

"Since the beginning of their activities, the states of the Balkan Entente have realized the importance of economic collaboration for better relations. The ideal of peace, Security, and independence of the Balkan Entente have demanded greater activity with a view to adapting production, communications, and the development of commercial exchange.

"The success of this activity," continues the POLITIKA, "was based on a formula which was the very essence of the pact, namely, a policy of independence, of non-adherence to any ideological group whatever, and

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of neutrality as regards conflicts of great powers. States belonging to the Balkan Entente have immediately grasped that such a policy was the fundamental condition for the life and success of such regional pacts and of each of them specifically."

The paper then notes that the States of the Balkan Entente have already declared their neutrality and policy of independence, and continues as follows:--

"Thus, the lively interest in the present conference of the states of the Balkan Entente does not mean that their meeting will have any exceptional importance or will bring any sensational decisions. This session will not upset the present balance of the conflicting powers. On the contrary, one may already expect that the conference will only strengthen the tendency to limit the war zone and to prevent the danger of extension of the conflict to this part of Europe. The unanimous desire of the Balkan states is to prevent the Balkans from becoming a battle-field. In order to have internal peace in the Balkans, they must following a program of avoiding discords which might exist between them. In this respect, a great part of their task has already been accomplished.

"The Balkan Entente will also examine economic proglems in order to bring about cooperation. Economic collaboration will also be offered to other states, even to the belligerents, without favoring any party.

"These policies of organizing peace and collaboration in the Balkans and of non-intervention in the conflicts of the great powers have made of the Balkan Entente a powerful foundation for peace in this part of Europe. The pact of the Balkan Entente, which is not directed against third parties and which does not depend upon anybody, has been and is the most natural means of insuring progress in peace and independence."

Enclosure No. 11 to despatch No. 870, dated February 7, 1940, from the Legation at Belgrade, entitled "Meeting of Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente in Belgrade on February 2-4, 1940."

TRANSLATION

VREME, February 4, 1940.

What has been evident since the first contact between the Foreign Ministers of the states of the Balkan Entente was yesterday fully confirmed:--Full solidarity between the members of the Entente as regards maintenance of peace in the Balkans and in the Danube basin.

After the toasts made yesterday evening it became apparent that this solidarity is not merely abstract and formal... The states of the Entente are facing several very complicated and delicate problems. In the first place, it was necessary to determine upon a definite attitude as regards the conflict in the West, as the consequences of this conflict are felt throughout Europe, including the Danube basin and the Balkans.

In this respect, the Governments of the countries of the Balkan Entente have from the very beginning of hostilities definitely assumed a status of neutrality. Such an attitude is not based on a feeling that the Balkans are threatened from any source. It is strict and sincere, but, on the other hand, the desire to remain neutral is accompanied by a firm resolution to defend integrity and independence. The speeches made by Mr. Cincar-Marković and Mr. Gafenco confirm that this policy will be continued in the future with the same attention and care as in the past.

Another equally important problem is that of relations between the members of the Entente and those states which geographically and geo-politically fall within the Balkan-Danube system but which do not adhere to the pact: Bulgaria and Hungary.

There exist some unsettled matters which demand a solution in order that collaboration in this part of Europe may be complete. More than ever the question of regulating relations of all states in this part of Europe, whether they are in the Entente or not, has during the last few months become acute. Yugoslavia and the other members of the Entente have made all possible efforts toward the settlement of these problems, and it may be said that a great improvement is already noticeable.

This is confirmed by the words of Mr. Gafenco, who said, referring to a statment of the Bulgarian Prime Minister, "Such words draw us nearer to the day of peace and make firmer our conviction that, within the enlarged framework of an entente such as ours, all relations between neighbors may be settled in a friendly fashion."

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The same was confirmed by Mr. Cincar-Marković, who said that the attitude of Bulgaria and Hungary was in harmony with the peaceful policy of the Balkan Entente. These words justify belief that future events will crown with success the diplomatic efforts made in this sense and that the Danube-Balkan region will find a formula for collaboration on the basis of mutual confidence and respect for the interests of the different states. This collaboration, which has already been outlined on the political horizon, will be of undeniable value for maintaining peace in this sector.

The appearance of Italy in the Balkans has increased the importance of our relation with this great power as a neighbor state which has always been linked with the fate of the Balkans. Italy's attitude in this war and its sincere desire to aid the cause of peace in the Balkans and in the Danube basin are a contribution of extreme importance. On its part, Italy has, like Yugoslavia, made efforts to harmonize relations in this area, and these efforts have been mentioned in the speeches of the two statesmen... The fact that words were said about an enlarged scale of the Entente* clearly indicates the direction which will be taken by the future activities of the Balkan Entente.

* Reference to Gafenco's speech (enclosure No. 4).

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bern, February 12, 1940

No. 1227

Subject: Transmitting article entitled "The Clodius Mission to Rome" by P. Gentizon.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAR 16 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Rating	Distribution Instructions
Grade for	O. N. I. M. I. A.

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The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 1221 of February 8, 1940, transmitting an article entitled "Rome and the Balkans" by P. Gentizon, and to transmit herewith the text, in French, of an article by Mr. Gentizon which appeared in the GAZETTE DE LAUSANNE of February 9, 1940, entitled "The Clodius Mission to Rome".

FILED
MAR 14 1940

Respectfully yours,

Leland Harrison.

Enclosure:
Text of article.
File No. 800
CRH/mk
In quintuplicate

GAZETTE DE LAUSANNE, February 9, 1940

LETTRE D'ITALIE

La mission Clodius à Rome

(De notre correspondant particulier)

Rome, février.

Devant la guerre économique qui sévit à cette heure, le Reich essaie par tous les moyens de desserrer l'étau qui l'étouffe On ne peut donc s'étonner que le chef des délégations allemandes chargé de traiter les affaires économiques à l'étranger, le ministre plénipotentiaire Dr Clodius, après avoir agi dans le sens que l'on sait à Bucarest, soit également venu à Rome. Il vient cependant de quitter les bords du Tibre sans qu'aucun renseignement ait été publié sur le résultat de ses négociations avec les dirigeants fascistes. Il est vrai que les conversations ont en grande partie touché le problème du ravitaillement du Reich et l'on sait qu'à cet égard les Allemands ne tiennent nullement à afficher leurs difficultés. On ne peut donc s'étonner du silence observé. Quels sont cependant la nature et l'aspect des rapports économiques entre l'Italie et le Reich? Disons d'abord que le *clearing* italo-allemand comporte en même temps des comptes très divers et très complexes. Les uns sont de nature commerciale, les autres de nature financière. Le but visé de part et d'autre est que ces comptes s'équilibrent de façon à ce qu'il n'y ait pas de solde à payer et que soit évité de la sorte tout transfert d'or ou de devises d'un pays à l'autre. L'an dernier, la créance que l'Allemagne avait sur l'Italie était de l'ordre d'environ un milliard. Pour éliminer cette dette, la péninsule envoyait, à son compte, des ouvriers agricoles en Allemagne ou payait les frais du tourisme allemand en Italie. De la sorte, la situation tendait à s'assainir.

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La guerre économique qui sévit à cette heure en Europe a tout remis en question en ce sens, par exemple, que l'élément compensateur le plus important, le tourisme allemand, a disparu. En même temps, l'émigration des 185,000 allogènes du Haut-Adige qui se sont prononcés pour l'Allemagne est venue compliquer la situation. Cet exode pose en effet entre Rome et Berlin l'importante question de la liquidation des biens de cette énorme masse de population. Jusqu'à ce jour, les chiffres les plus divers ont été prononcés. On a même parlé d'exigences allemandes s'élevant jusqu'à 17 milliards de lire. Les évaluations italiennes ne dépassent pas en revanche 5 milliards. En fait, l'estimation des biens des émigrants du Haut-Adige vient seulement de commencer. Tout ce que l'on peut dire c'est que l'Italie a dû voir un intérêt politique bien exceptionnel dans la rétrogradation allemande du Haut-Adige pour accepter une charge économique et financière de pareille envergure en un moment aussi délicat. De toute façon il s'agit de plusieurs milliards. Comment l'Italie va-t-elle les payer?

L'opération se fera très probablement par compensation. En premier lieu, tous les biens italiens qui ont été liquidés en Autriche, en Tchéco-Slovaquie et peut-être même en Allemagne, entreront en ligne de compte. Les produits, les marchandises viendront ensuite. L'Allemagne va s'efforcer d'obtenir de la péninsule une foule de choses utiles à la guerre. Mais l'Italie n'en a pas en abondance. Elle ne peut, par exemple, satisfaire l'Allemagne en combustible liquide ou en certains minerais dont la pénurie constitue pour le Reich un handicap des plus sérieux. Elle n'a ni le pétrole ni le fer en abondance, ni le chrome, ni le cuivre, ni le nickel, ni aucun produit rare. Elle-même veille à renforcer son potentiel militaire et civil. D'où la difficulté du problème. L'Italie peut tout au plus diriger vers le Reich du soufre, du chanvre, des pyrites, ainsi qu'une certaine quantité de produits alimentaires : blé, riz, fromage, sucre (déjà rationné en Italie), huile, etc. Mais avec la charge du paiement des biens du Haut-Adige, ces livraisons ne procureront aucune devise au Trésor italien. Bien plus, la guerre a écarté d'autres moyens d'échange, comme les agrumes (oranges, citrons, etc) et divers produits de luxe. Là-dessus se greffe encore le problème du charbon. L'Italie se voit forcée de transporter par le Gothard ou le Brenner une grande partie du charbon allemand dont elle a besoin. Elle est même obligée d'aller le chercher jusque dans la Ruhr avec ses propres vagons. D'où, finalement, une certaine pénurie de matériel roulant qui gêne son économie. C'est pourquoi les sujets de conversations n'ont pas dû manquer entre les dirigeants fascistes et le Dr Clodius. En définitive, la guerre actuelle soulève de nouvelles difficultés sur le terrain des rapports économiques italo-allemands. Autre conclusion : sur aucun point, les produits de la péninsule qui franchiront les Alpes ne seront de nature, par leur quantité, à renforcer de façon sensible la capacité de résistance du Reich.

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Il nous revient qu'au cours de son bref séjour sur les bords du Tibre, le Dr Clodius, de même que les membres de la délégation qui l'accompagnaient, n'ont cessé d'afficher un optimisme hyperbolique sur le déroulement de la guerre. C'est ainsi qu'à chaque occasion ils affirmaient que l'Allemagne serait victorieuse en moins de six mois. Mais en même temps, ils laissaient passer le bout de l'oreille en tenant certains propos où perçait quelque inquiétude pour l'avenir. C'est ainsi qu'ils développaient le thème que le peuple allemand se trouvait dans la nécessité absolue de vaincre « s'il ne voulait pas être anéanti à son tour comme l'a été le peuple polonais ». En tous domaines, ils s'efforçaient visiblement d'impressionner leurs auditeurs qui n'étaient pas toujours Italiens. Ils ne parlaient de rien moins que de démembrer l'Empire britannique, ce qui n'a rien de surprenant, et de « liquider la Russie », ce qui est un peu plus insolite.

La formule frappe en tout cas par sa franchise étonnante et sa portée extraordinaire. Elle n'aurait pas été possible si les Soviets l'avaient emporté en Finlande. Mais, devant la ligne Mannerheim, les troupes de Vorochilov ont manifesté une telle faiblesse, une telle impuissance, que la situation pourrait fort bien porter l'Allemagne à prendre le dessus sur son alliée orientale. A Rome, le bruit se répand que l'Allemagne commencerait déjà à commander à Moscou, en se basant sur la force et l'autorité de son génie de discipline et d'organisation vis-à-vis du désordre et de la confusion soviétiques. Dans les milieux diplomatiques internationaux, on se demande si l'Allemagne n'envisage pas d'exploiter l'échec russe en Finlande pour tenter une mainmise sur le Kremlin. Une telle opération signifierait, sous une autre forme il est vrai, la répétition de l'ancien rêve d'Hitler sur l'expansion allemande vers l'Orient. Clausevitz a dit que la guerre n'est que la continuation de la politique avec d'autres moyens. Hitler songerait aujourd'hui, en renversant la formule, à vaincre la Russie non par la guerre mais par la politique.

P. Gentizon.

No. 352

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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MAR 6 1940
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AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Barcelona, Spain, February 9, 1940

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 20 1940
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Meeting of Balkan Entente.

Rating	Distribution Instructions
Grade for Ar.	M/D

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON. MAR 15 1940

770.00/782

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-M/C
MAR 18 1940
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE

SIR:

I have the honor to inform the Department that the meeting of the Balkan entente in Belgrade has resulted in a number of leading articles on the subject in the local press. As of possible interest to the Department, I have the honor to enclose five translations of such articles, which have appeared during the last week, which are believed to be typical of the comments with regard to the Belgrade meeting in this part of Spain.

In an article of February 2, 1940, which appeared in the "Correo Catalán", the writer believes that Hungarian-Rumanian relations constitute the greatest obstacle to the successful conclusion of an understanding in Belgrade. This is also true of another article in the same paper, of February 1, which speaks of the tremendous importance of Rumania and the concern felt in Paris and London with regard to the eventual attitude of the Rumanian government.

The third article is taken from the "Vanguardia" of February 6, in which German satisfaction at the outcome of the meeting at Belgrade is emphasized, and which

MAR 21 1940

makes/

makes the unusual statement that Germany believes that it will be more easy to win the war with England and France if the present conflict can be limited to these three powers and if new complications are avoided. This view is somewhat surprising, to say the least, in view of the constant pressure which has been exerted in the past by Germany upon the neutral states.

The fourth article, taken from the "Correo Catalán", of February 7, states that the meeting of the Balkan entente has successfully maintained the mission entrusted to it upon its creation, that is, the maintenance of peace amongst the Balkan states; the establishing of a policy of conciliation with neighboring countries without taking part in the present conflict; the principle of common defense of mutual rights; the independence and protection of national territories; the intensification of commercial interchanges between the member states and finally the extension of the pact for a new period of 7 years. The article concludes that as a result of the conference the activities of certain countries designed to convert south-eastern Europe into a battlefield, may be considered to have failed, that peace in the Near East has been strengthened by the conference and that the situation in this area now indicated a tendency toward further stabilization.

The last article, which is taken from the "Correo Catalán" of February 8, is not quite so optimistic, and hints that there are other matters in the Near East which require a solution before peace is assured. It speaks hopefully, however, of the possibility of some satisfaction being given to Hungarian aspirations and

hints/

hints that both Bulgaria and Hungary may be in a position to obtain some concrete improvement as regards their territorial claims in view of improved Italo-Yugoslav Hungarian relations and Turkish influence in favor of Bulgaria.

Respectfully yours,

Howard Buckner I, Jr.
American Consul General.

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Enclosures:

5 translations of articles

800

HB/RAM

In quintuplicate to the Department
1 copy to Embassy at Madrid

Translation

(From "El Correo Catalán", of Barcelona, Spain, issue of February 1, 1940)

THE CONFERENCE OF THE BALKANIC ENTENTE

Under the presidency of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Roumania, Gregorio Cafenco, the sessions of the Conference of the Balkanic Entente will be inaugurated the day after tomorrow. They will take place at Belgrade and will be secret. The order of the day has been kept so secret that..... we all know the matters to be dealt with. This does not affect the interest of the meeting, especially since new aspects have come out which place it in the first place among political matters. To the general plan of problems to be resolved there are added the problems of Roumanian petroleum, the change in frontiers in south eastern Europe after the disappearance of Poland, the entry of Italy in the zone of Balkanic influence, where its intervention is every day more active. Another factor, which is not the less interesting, is the U.S.S.R. whose projects will be the object of a careful study, as well as the relations to be established between it and its neighbors.

The attitude of Roumania and its petroleum are becoming more and more a matter of concern in Paris and London. The Franco-British annoyance because of the concessions made by Bucharest to Germany is evident. Talk is afloat of pressure on the Tatarescu Government, with threats of a change in the policy of help to Roumania, which will bring about a revision of the commercial treaty between England and this country. Something must be true since the Minister of Economy, Angelesco, referring to the Roumanian policy as regards petroleum, revindicated for his country the right to follow the economic policy which better fits its interests and its position of a neutral State. His protest was aimed directly against foreign activities which are endeavoring to obstruct the liberty of movement of the internal policy of Roumania, pointing out that petroleum is not only the basis of Roumanian economy, but also the essential element of the military force of which Roumania is so much in need especially under the present international situation, and, in conclusion, the Minister stated that this need makes advisable an increase in the production of that product. As one of the matters to be discussed will be that of Balkanic relations with the great powers, it seems probable that one of the leading questions will be that the small countries, especifically the Balkan countries, may direct their economy free from foreign coercion.

The results of the Ciano-Csaki Conference and the question of the Hungary-Roumania frontiers, as well as the territorial claims of Bulgaria will be the subjects discussed at the sessions of the Conference to be inaugurated in Belgrade the day after tomorrow.

MR

Translation.

(From "El Correo Catalán", of Barcelona, Spain,
issue of February 2, 1940).

ROME IN BELGRADE

Three groups of nations - or rather, three different tendencies - have their eyes fixed on the Balkans and the Danube: London-Paris, Berlin-Rome and Moscow. Each one of them pretends to have a better right than the others to become the tutor of the different states which are holding a conference today in the capital of Jugoslavia to deal precisely with that and similar questions. But while one of the said tendencies takes up an attitude of deference toward the rights of the protected countries, the other displays an excessive zeal over the interests which it pretends to protect. It is therefore not surprising that the Balkan states should show a preference for a particular group of great powers despite the difference in political ideals, according to the particular interests which they wish to safeguard. Thus we see Roumania, Greece and Turkey hand in hand with France and Great Britain. Hungary and Jugoslavia show an inclination toward the Italian-German axis while Bulgaria relies on Germany since the latter, in view of old alliances and a community of destinies in the last World War, is the only country which considers Bulgaria's claims as legitimate. If Bulgaria ever had any hopes of being helped by Russia, such hopes have come to nought after Russia's military failure in her Finnish adventure. Bulgaria now wishes to have absolute peace, but on condition that the historical injustices to which she was subjected be straightened out.

The most thorny aspect of the whole conference will undoubtedly turn out to be the Hungarian-Roumanian relations. Hungary demands a revision of the Trianon Treaty, which Roumania opposes on the grounds of "iuris possidentis". Such motives would hold water were it not for the fact that there is such a thing as a "right", which completely annuls the "fact" of possession. The conciliation of such attitudes being a difficult matter, it has been thought to ask the mediation of Rome, who will at the right moment use her political influence. Tsintsar Markovitch has been appointed to expose Italy's viewpoints, which were fixed at the Ciano-Csaki interview in Venice last month. It is said that particularly interesting notes have been exchanged between the Italian government and the governments of the four Balkan states. It is therefore likely that Italy will have an active part in the future actions of the Entente. Great hopes are placed in the experience and wisdom of the Duce and of his foreign minister, Count Ciano. Will Italy succeed in harmonizing the conflicting interests of the Balkan-Danubian countries? Or will the belligerents spoil the good intentions of the conference and the conciliatory mediation of Rome? Here lies the serious danger of the conference.

MARIANO VILLENA.

RAM.

Translation

(From "La Vanguardia Española", of Barcelona, Spain, issue of February 6, 1940)

SPORTING PARENTHESIS AND THE BALKANIC CONFERENCE

The sixth month of war seems for the present to be competing with the previous ones as regards calmness. This lack of events permits, an unconceivable thing during the first year of the world war, to mobilize the special correspondents of the most important newspapers of the world who, since the beginning of last September, have been in Berlin awaiting the opportunity ofseeing military operations, so that they may attend the International Week of Winter Sports which terminated yesterday at Garmisch Partenkirsche. During four days this press reporter has stayed some kilometers away from the capital of the Reich witnessing several contests in the ice track and in the snow Stadium, combined with a few excursions through the German Alps.

Upon my return to Berlin, I keep a memory of my stay in Garmisch as a visit to a country strange to the present war, which is not reached by the echo of the struggle. This feeling is due to a large extent to the lack of news during these days, and to the desire of all persons who were present in what was the olympic city in 1936 not to remember about the war for some days.

San Sebastian and the three years of Spanish war come necessarily to the memory of any Spaniard visiting Garmisch at present. In making this comparison the city in northern Spain ranks first, because I have not seen in Garmisch the soldier recovering from the wounds received at the front, nor all that excitement around the official communiqué of war. Of course there is an enormous difference between our war, in which the "man" factor played the most important role, and the present European conflict, in which the soldier is some sort of a complement to the bellic machinery. This new system of carrying out a war among the great powers may be one of the conclusions that has the advantage of organizing, with enormous success, a week of international sport, while things are going on unchanged at the fronts. Anyway, the above conclusion cannot be definite, since the drama is only beginning.

Whatever is the case, it must be recognized that Germany has obtained a very good mark in the sporting world with its week at Garmisch.

Today the political circles of Berlin have again been enlivened, the comments being based on the results of the Conference at Belgrade.

Doctor Karl Megerle sets the German viewpoint with the assertion that Germany has seen with satisfaction that

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the states of southern Europe are willing to maintain peace, order and neutrality in the Balkans and in the Da nubian zone.

The diplomatic correspondent of the semi-official organ "Boersen Zeitung" points out that the communiqué of the Little Entente is a new demonstration of how all neutral countries have reacted against the efforts of Churchill and London to cause the largest possible number of States to enter the war.

Great satisfaction has been felt in Berlin for the declarations made at Belgrade, because the Germans believe that it will be more easy to liquidate a war with England and France if, avoiding new complications, it is possible to maintain the present conflict limited, as up to the present, to the three western powers.

The attitude of Turkey in the Conference of Belgrade has been the object of much comment. It was the opinion in official circles that Ankara having signed a pact of alliance with London and Paris after the outbreak of the conflict, it was the mission of the Turkish representative to work in favor of the British policy, that is, to spread discord among Balkanic states. After having signed the agreement with three other members of the Balkanic Entente in favor of peace in southeastern Europe, one is permitted to make the following question: Is it that Ankara has finally decided to work for peace and order in Europe?

The official reaction of Berlin before the Conference of Belgrade is of gratification, because of the good work done for the localization of the war, that is, endeavoring not to increase the obstacles so that peace may rapidly come to Europe the day it is possible.

MR

Translation

(From "El Correo Catalán", of Barcelona, Spain, issue of February 7, 1940)

PEACE IN THE NEAR EAST

The Balkanic Entente has fulfilled the mission entrusted to it upon its creation: maintenance of peace among the states composing the same; policy of conciliation with neighboring countries, without prejudice to the respective position in the present conflict; common defense of mutual rights, independence, and national territory; intensification of commercial interchanges, and extension of the Balkanic pact for a new period of seven years. It is required by order and safety of south-eastern Europe. If it is desired to keep this part of Europe free from the experiences of the war it must be on the basis of inspiring its relations on a spirit of comprehension and mutual peaceful cooperation. It rarely happens that the conclusions of an Assembly be accepted with such unanimous satisfaction as those of Belgrade. All political circles and the press in general express their gratification for the excellent results obtained, by which peace is affirmed, or better, war is driven away from the Near East. This is for the interest of the federate countries and for the convenience of the belligerent countries themselves, since no one wants to create new enemies.

The gesture of Rumania deserves a praising comment, since it appears to be disposed to begin conversations with Hungary and Bulgaria in order to put an end to the questions which constitute the serious cause for uneasiness in the Balkans. Talk is current of the possibility of a pact between Hungary and Jugoslavia which would undoubtedly facilitate a more close intelligence in the affairs which are fundamental for the definite stabilization of the Balkanic region. Turkey, on the other hand, by signing the agreement for the maintenance of peace, binds itself to become disengaged to a certain extent from its obligations to Great Britain and France acquired by virtue of the pact of mutual help recently signed. This is another factor of tranquility the value of which is not small. The Conference has had the ability of adopting resolutions susceptible of pleasing the two groups of belligerent countries. Finally, the work of pacification of Italy, which in conclusion must be credited with the success of the Conference, has been made evident. Its prestige has grown in the measure of its rights as a Balkanic power.

The activities of certain countries for converting south-eastern Europe into a battlefield and for acting there freely may, therefore, be considered a failure. Peace prevails in the Near East, strengthened after the Conference of Belgrade, with a tendency to an immediate stabilization.

MR

Translation

(From "El Correo Catalán", of Barcelona, Spain, issue of February 8, 1940)

NEW ORDER IN THE NEAR EAST

The Balkanic countries met at Belgrade ready to arrange all their differences. And knowing the problems that affect them, they fixed the bases for a possible agreement. The Balkanic question has now entered the phase which we might call of establishment of the premises which later on - third phase - will become effective. A precedent of great interest is the conference held yesterday at Nisch between the delegates of Jugoslavia, Greece and Turkey in which certain questions regarding the attitude of Bulgaria were discussed. The fact that Saradjoglu has stopped at Sophia in order to confer with Kiosseivanof shows that the question of Bulgaria deserved the attention of the conference, the resolution of which has been taken with extraordinary interest. If it is taken into account that the person in charge of communicating these results is the Minister of Turkey, a country having no difference with Bulgaria and which has always endeavored to conciliate Bulgarian interests with the other members of the Balkanic Entente, it would not be a mistake to think that the meeting of Belgrade begins to give its first positive results.

If, as it is affirmed, the agreement between Hungary and Jugoslavia, whether it is called a pact of mutual help or a military alliance, should be signed, the problem of the revindications of the Magyars would take an optimistic bias from the political viewpoint, since the Jugoslavian vote is of great value as counter-weight of other helps which support the Rumanian thesis. And we may consider certain that Italy is not very far away from this approximation between Jugoslavia and Hungary. Thus, we have seen that the relations between Bulgaria and Jugoslavia, qualified as "eternal friendship" have been strengthened; and that the relations between Jugoslavia and Hungary and between Turkey and Bulgaria, although more recent, are undoubtedly being strengthened up to the point where Turkey and Jugoslavia have represented Bulgaria and Hungary - defending earnestly their respective rights - in the Conference of Belgrade. The territorial problems existing in the Danubian Basin will not be settled through violence, but within an atmosphere of a friendly understanding. Hungary and Bulgaria have improved - it is well to mention it - their relations with the Balkanic League.

It would certainly be premature to state that the entire balkanic question has been settled, but here are the premises, the important results for the present and future situation of Europe, which will very soon enter the phase of practical resolutions.

MR

NO. 377

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
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MAR 19 1940
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ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
MAR 13 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Barcelona, Spain, February 15, 1940.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 5 1940
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

SUBJECT: The Recent Meeting of the Balkan Entente.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-M/C
MAR 13 1940
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE

770.00/783

With regard to ~~previous despatches regarding~~ comment in the local press concerning the recent meeting at Belgrade of the Balkan Entente, I have the honor to enclose a translation of a leading article on the subject which appeared in "La Vanguardia Española" of February 10, 1940. The article states that although other matters of more immediate interest have somewhat diverted public attention, the matters of real interest continue to be the combinations which are being brought about in Europe as a result of the Belgrade meeting. The article states that the main result of this meeting was that it demonstrated the will for peace which is common to all the countries which form the Balkan Entente.

The article then states that the firm attitude adopted by the Balkan countries has shown the allied war council the impossibility of extending the

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conflict

conflict to the Balkans which may result in a British acceptance of what is alleged to be a French view, that real assistance should be given to Finland regardless of the consequences which might result from such action. The article in this connection states that while it is impossible to see whether or not this will be the case, it should be noted that the British and French press is now insisting on the need of urgent help being given to Finland.

Respectfully yours,

Howard Buckhell, Jr.
American Consul General

Enclosure:

Translation of article.

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HB/MR

5 copies to Department of State.
1 copy to Embassy at Madrid.

Translation

(From "La Vanguardia Española", of Barcelona, Spain, issue of February 10, 1940).

AFTER BELGRADE.

The Belgrade meeting has been the most important event in recent political activity during the course of this strange war, whose main battles, or rather whose only battles, are being fought in the secrecy of chancelries. After the Belgrade meeting a slight pause seems to have been established, of which observers are availing themselves in order to study questions of secondary importance, such as, for example, the next Canadian elections or the eternal Irish problem. Nevertheless, the matters of real interest continue to be the combinations that are being wrought in Europe as a consequence of the Belgrade meeting.

The meeting of the Balkan entente has had a main result which seems to be perfectly clear, i.e. the will for peace of the countries forming the said entente. Although this conclusion may have been received everywhere, officially, with satisfaction, there is no denying that it has so been received at the Chiggi Palace with more sincerety than elsewhere, since it conforms to the line of policy laid down by Rome from the very start. It is therefore a feather in the cap of Italian policy of non-belligerence, but it is also an unquestionable success for the Balkan countries, who have not only shown a firm will for peace, but also a spirit of independence by rejecting any suggestions more or less bellicose which they may have received from other powers. An interesting result is also Hungary's and Bulgaria's adhesion to this line of policy. The former as a result of her alliance with Italy and the latter by virtue, principally, of her revived friendship with Turkey, which is one of the most interesting political phenomena of present politics.

If any faith can be put on certain reports, it would appear that the Belgrade meeting, or rather, its unquestionably pacific conclusions, might have a favorable effect on the help to Finland from the western powers. It seems, according to reliable information, that the recent meeting held by the war council of the Allies, was forced to acknowledge the impossibility of extending the conflict to the Balkans in view of the firm stand for peace of the inhabitants thereof; it is therefore a question of helping Finland seriously so as to be sure of that front in connection with the western war. This would entail the acceptance, by the English, of the French viewpoint which advocated, right from the beginning, because of political and moral reasons, the giving of real assistance to Finland irrespective of all the consequences which might result from such decided help.

It is difficult to say what amount of truth there may be in these reports, but the fact is that the press of the two great western powers is repeatedly insisting these days on the need for urgent help to the Finns.

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The semi-official "Times" stresses the fact that neither England nor France has forgotten the promise of help made to Finland. And the likewise semi-official "Temps" publishes an editorial in which it presents the possibility of a Finnish defeat as being full of serious "moral, diplomatic and political" consequences for the Allies. Can the Belgrade meeting, by any chance, have had the immediate effect of again transferring the political field to northern Europe? It is not yet possible, in the present confused situation, to say if that is so. Evidently, General Weygand's visit to Egypt is not devoid of political interest; neither are certain articles (serving no doubt a definite purpose) which have appeared in Hungarian newspapers demanding, in connection with the decisions of the Balkan entente, that the situation be made perfectly clear as regards the non-forgotten problem of Transylvania.

RAM

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